DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 447 145 TM 030 245

AUTHOR Hone, Lisa Richards, Ed.
TITLE GED Items, 1999. The Newsletter of the GED Testing Service.
INSTITUTION American Council on Education, Washington, DC. General Educational Development Testing Service.
ISSN ISSN-0896-0518
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 67p.; Published bimonthly. There is no issue number 5.
AVAILABLE FROM General Educational Development Testing Service, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20036-1163.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT GED Items; v16 n1-6 Jan-Dec 1999
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; Educational Certificates; *Equivalency Tests; Family Programs; *High School Equivalency Programs; High School Graduates; Nontraditional Education; Secondary Education; *Standards; Test Results; Test Use; *Testing Problems
IDENTIFIERS *General Educational Development Tests

ABSTRACT

Six issues of the newsletter of the General Educational Development Testing Service discuss developments of interest to users of the Tests of General Educational Development (GED) in the United States and Canada. The feature article of each issue is: (1) "Survey of Testing Centers Reveals Trends in Access to Technology"; (2) "Washington State Correctional Facility Conducts Graduation Ceremony, Offers College Guidance" (William Lisk); (3) "Successful Graduates Say Determination and GED Diploma Opened Future Possibilities" (George E. Aalto); (4) "New Orleans Fire Chief Honored at GEDTS 1999 Summer Conference"; and (5) "2002-series GED Tests: What's New?" (issue number 6). Most of the issues contain a message from the GED Program Director, and all contain a "News and Notes" section that describes interesting events connected with GED use. Three issues contain a graduate profile, four contain "Teaching Tips," and most issues contain some brief program descriptions of interest to GED users and examiners. (SLD)

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ED 447 145

GED Items
1999

The Newsletter of the GED Testing Service

American Council on Education

Volume 16
Numbers 1-6
January-December 1999

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Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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GED Items

more than 24,000 readers

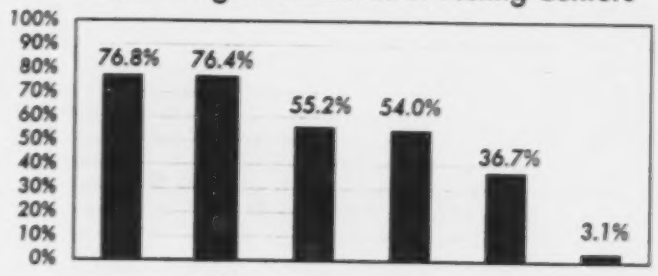
VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1 AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1999

Survey of Testing Centers Reveals Trends in Access to Technology

Between August 1997 and February 1998, 2,656 GED Chief Examiners and GED Administrators responded to a survey covering computer and information use in their daily testing center operations. The survey, mailed to approximately 3,200 GED Testing Centers in the United States, Canada, and the territories, asked questions about access to the Internet, usefulness of certain publications, and perceptions about and preferences for using technology.

The survey findings show that while a large majority of centers are—or soon will be—computer equipped, many still rely on paper for recordkeeping and information retrieval. This finding reflects the diverse nature of communities providing the GED program. While some Official GED Testing Centers exist on university campuses, others exist on remote Native American reservations. While some testing centers look forward to the opportunity to administer the tests via computer, many others express worries over the changes introduced with the termination of hand-scoring in September 2001. There is no doubt that technology brings both exciting opportunities and unique challenges, but in looking at the program as a whole, some clear patterns emerge.

Figure 1
Technological Features of Testing Centers



Note: These figures are based on the 83 percent of testing centers that responded to the survey.

Computer Use

More than four out of five testing centers responded to the survey. Of those, 76 percent use an IBM or IBM clone, while only about 8 percent use a Macintosh. An additional 5 percent of testing centers use both platforms. About 8 percent of all respondents indicated that they expect to have a new computer in their office within two years. Less than 7 percent of respondents indicated that they do not have a computer and do not expect to get one.

Selected Technological Features

More than three-quarters (76 percent) of respondents use a Microsoft Windows operating system (Windows 95, Windows NT, or a previous incarnation) and a LaserJet or InkJet printer (77 percent) to perform automated office functions. Slightly more than half of the GED Testing Centers have access to the Internet (55 percent); 54 percent also reported that their program, school, or institution has a website (see Figure 1). An additional 11 percent indicated that their institution has plans to construct a website by 2000.

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President and Mrs. Bush Honored at Literacy Liftoff '98 Conference

by Joan Auchter

In October, the GED Testing Service was invited to spend four minutes talking about the GED program at Literacy Liftoff '98 in Houston, Texas, sponsored by Literacy Volunteers of America. How could a speech, in 240 ticks of the clock, best capture an important message about this program? I determined that the best way to describe the GED was in terms of its place among the many programs that serve adult learners. In addition, the guests of honor that night were President and Mrs. Bush. As we were gathered to recognize the Bushes' contributions to the field of adult literacy and education, it was a privilege to use my fleeting seconds to honor their monumental contributions.

Joan Auchter, Executive Director of the GED Testing Service, honored President and Mrs. Bush for their contributions to the field of adult literacy and education. The Literacy Liftoff Conference in Houston, Texas, was sponsored by Literacy Volunteers of America.

The leadership of both President and Mrs. Bush has provided the infrastructure to strengthen the initiatives that promote literacy throughout the nation. President Bush, in promoting the development of the National Education Goals and signing the National Literacy Act in 1991, turned the federal spotlight onto the issue of literacy in America. Mrs. Bush's long-standing promotion of reading and literacy stretches back to her days as a young mother in Texas, and forward to the recent establishment of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. Her decades of tireless work to raise the nation's awareness of this critical issue, begun in churches and high school auditoriums, has expanded with time, experience, growth, and extended connections.

Each of the adult educators assembled in the room that evening were there because we have a common mission—we serve the families of the more than fifty million adults who do not have a high school-level education. The challenge of moving this large segment of our population from dependency to self-sufficiency is multifaceted. While we all provide access to education and training, each of our organizations contributes a different set of services. Together, our organizations join hands to offer hope and provide the opportunity to all Americans—as

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WINNER
APEX '98
AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE

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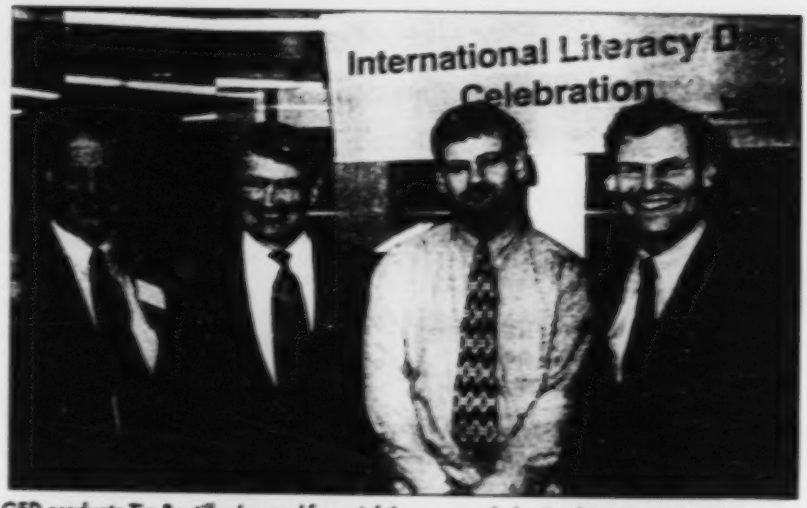
Ex-Fisherman Wins College Scholarship as Nova Scotia Celebrates Literacy and GED

by Erick Burley

In celebration of International Literacy Day on September 8, the Province of Nova Scotia once again demonstrated its commitment to literacy, lifelong learning, and adult learners in a variety of settings and ceremonies conducted provincewide. One of the events marking the day was an appreciation ceremony at Alderney Gate Library in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, honoring both literacy volunteers and adult learners who achieved their GED certification.

An appreciation ceremony at Alderney Gate Library in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, honored both literacy volunteers and adult learners who achieved their GED certification.

A highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of the Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd. (AECL) GED Scholarship by the company's Coordinator of Educational Programs for the Atlantic Region, Clair Ripley, and Nova Scotia's Minister of Education and Culture, Hon. Robert Harrison. The award's purpose is to encourage and assist GED recipients in Canada's Atlantic Region in pursuing a postsecondary education in science, mathematics, or engineering. AECL presents the scholarship annually in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island; each carries a value of Can$1,000. In presenting the award, Ripley challenged other regional industries to join in offering scholarships to GED recipients.



GED graduate Tim Boutiller (second from right) was awarded a Can$1,000 scholarship to help him transition to a career in science. Appearing with him from left to right are Clair Ripley, AECL; Hon. Russell MacLellan, Premier of Nova Scotia; and Hon. Robert Harrison, Nova Scotia's Minister of Education and Culture.

The winner of the 1998 AECL GED Scholarship is Timothy Boutiller of Mushaboom, Nova Scotia. He was recently accepted into the Bachelor of Science program at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The winner of the 1998 AECL GED Scholarship is Timothy Boutiller of Mushaboom, Nova Scotia. Before successfully completing his GED, Boutiller was a fisherman on the east coast of Nova Scotia until the collapse of the fishing industry in that area. He was recently accepted into the Bachelor of Science program at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In addition, Boutiller was also the recipient of the 1998 GED National Award for Outstanding Achievement in the province, having earned a total score of 370 on his first writing of the tests.

Notable speakers and presenters at the Dartmouth literacy celebration also included Nova Scotia's Premier, Hon. Russell MacLellan; Senator Joyce Fairbairn; and Jacques Brunelle of Canada Post Corporation.

Erick Burley is a business major at the University of New Brunswick, St. Johns, and an intern with AECL in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

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GED to Publish Report Examining K–12 Academic Content Standards Across U.S.

What should students know and be able to do in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies in the year 2000 and beyond?

As we enter the twenty-first century, we are encountering continued educational reform on the national and international level. In 1994, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act began funding "the development and certification of high-quality, internationally competitive content and student performance standards." Standards establish what students should know and be able to do at key points during their K–12 career. Once largely confined to academic inquiry, academic standards today face political and corporate scrutiny.

The GED Testing Service is completing a research report on the academic content standards being established across the United States. *Alignment of National and State Content Standards: A Report by the GED Testing Service*, available later this spring, provides an overview of U.S. and state standards reform and seeks to answer two questions:

- *What do national and state standards say that graduating seniors should know and be able to do in the year 2000 and beyond in the core academic subjects of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies?*
- *What do these standards mean for the future of the GED?*

This essential work will provide the adult education community with a clear understanding of the common expectations being placed on graduating high school seniors across the United States and will form the foundation for new GED Tests, scheduled for release in September 2001.

The "Standards Movement"

The "standards movement," as it is called today, began in Charlottesville, Virginia, when President Bush and the nation's governors held a bipartisan education summit in September 1989. Motivating this unprecedented conference was the belief that:

"Most students leave the U.S. educational system without ever seriously being challenged, [without] fully knowing what they are capable of doing, and [without] having gained the tools and skills they need to survive and prosper." (National Educational Goals Report, 1993)

At that summit, the governors laid the groundwork for the National Education Goals, with subsequent legislation reaffirming the need for national standards. Today, 49 states have initiated or completed the development of content standards.

About the Study

Alignment of National and State Content Standards offers a comprehensive look the skills and knowledge that high school seniors are being asked to demonstrate in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies before they graduate. The study examines the extent to which a common vision exists across national and state initiatives.

GED test specialists in the four content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies examined the national standards set by professional organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Math (NCTM) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). They also analyzed multiple state-level initiatives to identify the most widely accepted standards. Leading educators, practicing K–12 teachers, state standards supervisors, college professors, and teacher educators then reviewed the findings.

Reasons for the Study

The credential adults earn by passing the GED Tests is commonly called a high school equivalency diploma. By passing the tests, a person demonstrates that he or she has mastered the major skills and concepts normally associated with high school completion.

Since 1942, the value of the GED has rested on two pillars. First, because jurisdictions award high school equivalency diplomas based on passing the GED Tests, the content of the tests must conform as closely as possible to the core academic high school curriculum. Second, periodic norming of the GED Tests on a stratified random nationally representative sample of graduating high school seniors allows the passing standards for the GED Tests to be referenced to the actual performance of traditional graduates.

As a result of the standards movement, well-defined educational standards now reside at nearly every level. Content standards focus on

continued on page 12

Heavy-Duty Shipping Containers Meet Panel Specifications, Ensure Security

The GED Testing Service (GEDTS) recently implemented the use of new heavy-duty, secure shipping containers. The decision to use these new containers was the result of a December 1996 Security Task Force meeting hosted by GEDTS and comprised of GED Administrators and Examiners representing all jurisdictions (e.g., regional, number of test centers, testing volume). This task force addressed the issue of compromising the security of test materials during transport as a result of using inappropriate shipping containers or unauthorized persons opening the shipping containers. The task force recommended that GEDTS use heavy-duty, secure plastic shipping containers for the transit of secure materials back and forth between GEDTS and Official GED Testing Centers.

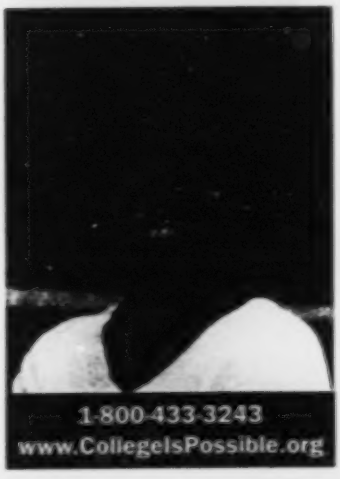
In late 1996, GEDTS introduced a new fee structure; part of the resulting fee increases were designated for test security. In September 1998, after careful review and consultation with a task force of Administrators, GEDTS contracted with a supplier to produce and deliver heavy-duty shipping containers.

Effective January 1, 1999, GEDTS began shipping all secure test materials in the new plastic shipping containers. Each shipping container is secured with a tamper-evident wire seal. If this seal is broken, the Chief Examiner must treat the contents of the container as compromised and begin the appropriate investigation (refer to Section 4.3-5 of the 1997 *GED Examiner's Manual*).

To break the tamper-evident seals when materials are received, Chief Examiners will need to cut the wire seal with wire snips; ordinary office shears will not break the wire seal. Chief Examiners must return their 1998 secure contract materials in the same plastic containers. GEDTS will send new tamper-evident seals to each testing center under separate cover to secure the container for return mail.

If the Chief Examiner does not return the 1998 contract materials in the new plastic containers, GEDTS must charge the center $130 for each shipping container that is not returned. In addition, GEDTS will consider the testing center to be in violation of *Examiner's Manual* security procedures and will notify the GED Administrator for that testing center's jurisdiction.

In December 1998, GEDTS mailed a memorandum addressing this issue to GED Chief Examiners and GED Administrators. For more information, please contact your state, provincial, or territorial GED Administrator, or call the GED Testing Service Program Operations staff at (202) 939-9490.



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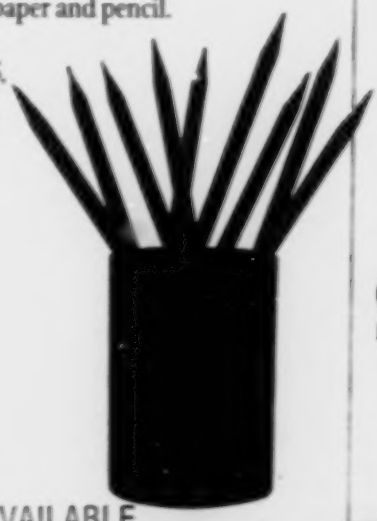

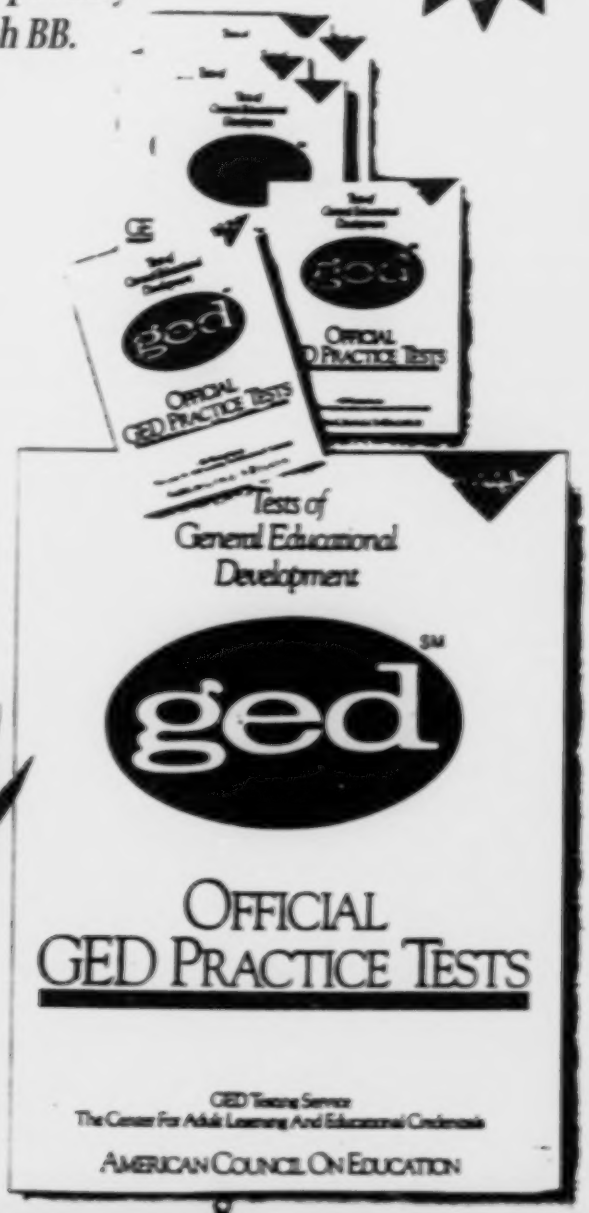

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Figure 2
Format Preferences

	Paper	Diskette	CD-ROM	ERIC/Internet
Examiner's Manual (most preferred)	50.5%	22.8%	28.7%	14.0%
Who Took the GED? (most preferred)	50.3%	24.5%	24.6%	18.8%

Note: Respondents were asked to rate each format on a four-point scale ranging from "least preferred" to "most preferred." Percentages add up to more than 100 because some respondents ranked multiple formats at the top of the scale.

***Technology Survey,** from page 1*

However, despite the increasing access to computers and Internet technology, more than half of GED Examiners and Administrators indicated a preference for paper copies of publications such as the *GED Examiner's Manual* (see Figure 2).

About half of respondents... indicated a strong preference for paper versions of the Examiner's Manual and the annual statistical report.

Further study is needed to determine the reasons for this preference. Because about half of respondents also indicated a strong preference for either diskette or CD-ROM versions of the manual and the annual statistical report (titled, *Who Took the GED?*), the GED Testing Service is moving toward parallel development and distribution of both traditional paper and computer-based versions.

Who Scores the Answer Sheets?

Nearly half of all examinee answer sheets are scored at the local testing center level. However, the survey did not ask whether these scoring operations were performed manually or with the aid of a computer scanner. State, provincial, and territorial governments accounted for the second largest provider of scoring services. The remainder of testing centers use a commercial scoring service (9 percent), an institutionally operated scoring consortium (6 percent), or a combination of methods. It is also interesting to note that while approximately half of the respondents indicated that they prefer to receive information on diskette or CD-ROM, very few use electronic methods for sending testing center data to the state, provincial, or territorial GED Administrator's office. Most reporting of examinee data to the GED Administrator for purposes of credentialing and statistical report collection are paper records on individual examinees (see Figure 3). This finding also highlights an area where additional study is needed.

The answers provided by the responding GED Examiners and GED Administrators will help the GED Testing Service to improve products and services that support testing operations.

The GED Testing Service thanks the thousands of busy GED Chief Examiners and state, provincial, and territorial GED Administrators who took the time to respond to the technology and information survey.

Figure 3
Reporting Data

	Paper	Diskette	E-Mail	Other
Method of Reporting Data	85.0%	2.3%	0.8%	7.7%
	Individual	Aggregated	Combination	Other
Format of Data Report	56.8%	21.1%	12.1%	3.2%

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 because some respondents did not answer the question.

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Spelling Bee Raises Funds, Links Community

Corporate workers' spelling skills helped them raise more than $22,000 for the Adult Literacy League of Central Florida. A corporate spelling bee, staged in September in Orlando, marked both Literacy Month and the League's 30th anniversary. Companies that sent teams to the competition included Arthur Andersen; Borders Books and Music; Ernst and Young; Harcourt Brace; InfoSource, Inc.; Darden Restaurants; American Pioneer Title Insurance; KPMG Peat Marwick; Starbucks; Science Applications International; Price Waterhouse Coopers; and Sprint. The winners—Science Applications International—beat a team of Barnes and Noble salespeople on the word "fortississimo." Headline sponsors for the spelling bee were the *Orlando Sentinel*, the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation, and Universal Studios Escape.

A special event such as this was part of the strategic plan that Joyce Whidden developed when she joined the League as director three years ago. Although the League regularly stages events for clients and volunteers, she knew that organizing a noteworthy fundraiser would be a new challenge. "The first step was research," says Whidden. "so I went to my contacts, people I knew in the education and volunteer community, and asked them what they had found successful."

Among the other ideas that the league researched were black-tie galas, a Scrabble tournament, and "Read-a-palooza," a literacy-focused adaptation of the popular music and cultural event that tours the United States each summer. During this research stage, Whidden found that a few organizations had already developed written instructions on staging a corporate spelling bee. This meant that the League could try a novel event while capitalizing on the experience of others. With the Board's approval, the next step was to find someone to pull it together. Former Adult Literacy League Board member Melissa Sublette proved the ideal candidate, taking on the spelling bee about 18 months before the target date. With additional volunteers to handle specific jobs, the serious preparation began about one year prior to the event.

> *"Not only was [the spelling bee] profitable, but it was so much fun!"*
> *–Joyce Whidden*
> *-Director, Adult Literacy League of Central Florida*

What recommendations does Whidden have for those considering staging a corporate spelling bee?

1) Watch a spelling bee in action. Sublette and Whidden attended a corporate spelling bee staged by Whidden's counterpart in Longview, Texas, Fredda Peppard. "Watching the event added a valuable dimension to the handbooks that Fredda and the Boston Adult Literacy Fund had developed."

2) Engage your community. For example, Sublette convinced her employer, Darden Restaurants, to underwrite the Longview trip. Volunteers signed a popular deejay to emcee the event and recruited a local superintendent of schools and nearby college executives to officiate at the competition.

3) Get the Board on board. Give your Board of Directors regular updates. Ask for their support and advice. Board members are often glad to assist by using their contacts and providing specialized expertise.

The League is now gearing up to do the event again this year. "Not only was it profitable, but it was so much fun!" says Whidden. "There we were on a Universal soundstage, and a scriptwriter couldn't have done a better job of setting the final showdown between the avant-garde bookstore staffers and the mainstream computer programmers."

Recommendations for Staging Your Own Corporate Spelling Bee

1. Watch a spelling bee in action.
2. Engage your community.
3. Get the Board on board. Give them updates and ask for their support and advice.

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GED Store Winter Sale!

Royal Blue coffee mug with gold GED logo and rim. **Regularly $8.00,** sale price $4.00.

Insulated lunch bags in royal blue with GED logo. **Regularly $7.50,** sale price $3.50.

Silver-nickel embossed key chain, (2 1/2" x 1 3/8" oval). **Regularly $7.00,** sale price $3.00.

White 100% cotton T-shirt with blue GED logo, pre-shrunk. Available in Adult Large or Extra Large. **Regularly $8.50,** sale price $5.00.

Chromatic gift boxed GED pen and pencil set in blue with gold logo. **Regularly $15.00,** sale price $10.00

White coffee mug with blue GED logo. **Regularly $8.00,** sale price $4.00.

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Show your appreciation with recognition gifts for your GED graduates, educators, and administrators!

	Unit Price		Quantity		Item-Total
T-shirt (specify large or X-large)	$ 5.00	x	_____	=	_____
White Coffee Mug	$ 4.00	x	_____	=	_____
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New Address Eases Navigation to GED Website

The Official GED Website can now be accessed through a shorter Universal Resource Locator (URL) address: **http://www.gedtest.org**. This URL brings the browser to the main GED page within the parent organization's website (http://www.acenet.edu). The GED Testing Service (GEDTS) is a program of the American Council on Education (ACE). In addition, the websites for GEDTS and ACE are undergoing a reconstruction that is scheduled to be unveiled in early February. The organization hopes that these changes will make it easier for online users to find the information they need.

Workplace Education Pays Off for GED Grads

Dobbs International Services, the airline catering provider, sponsors an employee education program dubbed "Dobbs Caters to Learning" in 46 cities across the United States. The Memphis-based company offers adult basic education, GED prep, English as a Second Language classes, and computer workshops. The company's programs vary depending on local needs, and all programs are open to both employees and their immediate family members. Cap-and-gown ceremonies for GED graduates take place at the job site, and Dobbs employees who earn their GED become eligible to apply for a $500 college grant. For more information, contact Willie Blackwell at (770) 991-4500 or wblackwell@DobbsIntServices.com.

The Cat in the Hat Wants You!

Join the National Education Association, the American Library Association, and family literacy and education agencies nationwide in celebrating "Read Across America." Celebrations and events across the United States on March 2, 1999, will commemorate Dr. Seuss's 95th birthday with group readings of *The Cat in the Hat* and other classics. Last year, 10 million children participated in special events. For information and ideas on how adults can participate, call (202) 822-SEUS.

New GED Administrators

The GED Testing Service welcomes Amaate Neil, the new GED Administrator for the District of Columbia, (202) 274-7175. Also new to the program is Steve Marcus, GED Administrator for Palau, (680) 488-2570. Laurie Edwards has replaced Nancy Hyland in Nova Scotia, (902) 424-5763. Nancy is on loan to the newly established Canadian territory of Nunavit.

Immigration Fees Rise

On January 15, 1999, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service raised citizenship application fees to $225. Previously, the cost was $95.

The great aim of education is not knowledge but action.

—Herbert Spencer
English philosopher
1820–1903

From basic reading through GED preparation, KET videos help adult students prepare for the future.

The KET/GED Series (GED ON TV)
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from TELEVISION AND ADULT LITERACY, a Ford Foundation report

From the Director, from page 2

parents, as children, as learners, and as workers—to make a difference, to learn to read, to earn a high school diploma or a GED, and to become more productive citizens and make informed choices.

In today's labor market, education is a major key to performance. By credentialing high school-level knowledge and skills, the GED diploma is the bridge between adult literacy programs and the individual's power to take the next step to further education and better career opportunities. As Mrs. Bush so generously wrote in individual letters to more than 22 million GED graduates, "I hope this is the beginning of a new life for you with many new options—better job opportunities, the continuation of your education, or the pursuit of a career. And you will be better able to help others—your children or other family members, and friends or neighbors who need the inspiration to go on with their own education. Please reach out to those who can profit from your example. Show them it is never too late, or too early, to learn."

On behalf of the GED program, all literacy providers attending the Literacy Liftoff Conference, and all of the many others out in the field who serve as "points of light" for family literacy, I was privileged to present President and Mrs. Bush with the "Star Stream." The designer of this piece describes it as "two sparkling stars linked by a trail of light reflecting the bond between two entities." The message engraved on the base reads, "To President and Mrs. Bush, Two Stars Lighting the Pathway to National Family Literacy." It takes strong partnerships to support people. We thank President and Mrs. Bush for lighting the way.

Academic Standards, from page 4

measurable outcomes and therefore serve as a foundation for the GED Tests—and the skills the tests certify.

Conclusion

The development of national and state content standards remains in transition. In addition, many of the state-level grade 12 assessments will not be implemented until 2000 and beyond. *Alignment of National and State Content Standards* captures a unique, but significant, period in the history of the U.S. educational system. Whatever changes may occur over time, this research report provides an expansive portrait of the nation's expectations for young adults coming of age in the late twentieth century.

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Washington State Correctional Facility Conducts Graduation Ceremony, Offers College Guidance

by Wilma Lisk

At South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC), a young man stops at the Counseling Center's information desk to check the time of his advisory appointment. The next stop is the Financial Aid Office to ensure that his financial aid came through. It's a routine repeated hundreds of times each quarter at SPSCC, but this student's history varies from that of most college students. His story started somewhere completely different.

At the Thurston County Correctional Facility in Olympia, Washington, a clean-cut 30-year-old man wipes the sleeve of his graduation gown across his moist cheek. "No one would believe I had to come here to finally get my GED. But it's the proudest day of my life." He is one of more than 50 prisoners at the facility who passed the battery of five tests this year, and he is receiving his diploma in a ceremony

Front row, left to right: Kacie Sanborn, Instructional Assistant; Troy Grosskopf; Philip Downey; Patricia Olney; Crystal Ashley-duVerglas, Instructor. Second row: Mike Miner, Mike Hambleton, Shawn Madigan, John Looysen, Don Godsey. Back row: Phillip Cavin, Richard Johnston.

that the correctional staff and administration celebrate every quarter.

Crystal Ashley-duVerglas, the jail's Adult Basic Education teacher for SPSCC, says that the program's success is due to several factors. First, the GED program is entirely voluntary. The inmates know that they can take the tests at any of the regularly scheduled sessions and can attend classes between tests to prepare. Each inmate signs a contract at the first class session, agreeing to rules that reflect good study habits and compliance with jail regulations.

Second, every student undergoes an assessment to determine his or her strengths and weaknesses, receiving tips on the skills that need improvement. To keep disappointment to a minimum, program administrators encourage inmates to take the GED Tests only after they pass the official practice tests comfortably.

Incentives are the third successful feature of this facility's GED program. Last year, when inmates repeatedly requested folders so that they could organize their letters, court documents, and homework, Ashley-duVerglas recruited a local office supply store to donate materials for an award packet. When students pass their first test or tutor others, they receive a folder, paper, and envelopes. For students who earn their diploma, the prize is a glossy folder with stationery, envelopes, pencils, and a calendar. Each quarter, the student with the highest GED score receives an

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Master Classes: Learning from One Another

by Joan Auchter

When I was young, I had grand visions of performing on stage. Sometimes I was an actor, other times a dancer or a singer. In my more dramatic moments, my mother would fondly call me her "little Sarah Bernhardt." Always the learner, I yearned to study with the masters.

Today, I find myself on stage many times a month. My role is advocate of adult learners and family literacy, promoting access and success along the continuum of lifelong learning. For me, each experience is a master class, an opportunity to learn from successful professionals who have expertise in specialized areas. Master classes sometimes pop up in unusual settings. Let me share three specific incidents that occurred in February.

As I sat in a hospital waiting area anticipating news of my father's condition, I glanced across the room and met the eye of Debra Kimbler. Together, she and I had survived our first year of teaching; Debra now serves as GED Examiner for that same school district. I first learned of her role with GED when Fred Edwards told me the story of a dedicated examiner who stayed in the testing room with her tests while her building was evacuated for a bomb scare. As Debra and I took a moment to catch up, she shared her concerns with having a part-time GED Examiner's position. While it is possible to register candidates, effectively administer the tests, and prepare materials for scoring and reporting, those responsibilities always exceed her allocated hours. She longs to market the tests, counsel students, and serve as a bridge to the adult education community, workplace, and higher education. I've spoken with other GED Examiners who are in a similar situation. No easy answer, but a valid issue for discussion. Questions on these issues are part of a national survey on the GED delivery system mailed to more than 2,600 U. S. Examiners. A master class.

Each of you as adult education and literacy providers lead daily master classes, both planned and extemporaneous. I always appreciate the opportunity to learn from such masters.

A quick flight to Georgia's 10th Annual Literacy Conference, and a second master class. Jean DeVard-Kemp, Assistant Commissioner, and Kim Lee, GED Director for Georgia's Department of Technical and Adult Education, pulled out all the stops for this conference. As GEDTS prepares a strategic plan to communicate the changes for the 2001-series GED Tests, we are highly aware of outreach initiatives. On the cover of Georgia's GED luncheon program was a GED diploma, accompanied by the message: "It looks like a diploma, but works like a passport." Pretty masterful! In addition, Jean and Kim planned a ceremony to salute the support from state leaders. State Governor Roy Barnes; Dr. Stephen Portch, Chancellor of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia; Linda Schrenko, State Superintendent of Schools; and Dr. Kenneth H. Breeden, Commissioner, Department of Technical and Adult Education greeted hundreds of dedicated literacy providers at the opening ceremony. A very effective way to advocate the platform for lifelong learning and get the message to those who can support the initiative.

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WINNER
APEX'98
AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE

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High-Scoring GED Graduate Enters College, Welcomes the Challenge of Higher Education

by James Rust

With my excellent memory and comprehension skills, high school should have been "cake" for me and should have been followed by a college education. I breezed through my early school years with minimal effort. But beginning in sixth grade, I began to get bored with school. I did tons of extra reading, memorizing facts, formulas, and poetry so that I could flaunt my reading habits. An outspoken and rebellious joker in class, I tried the patience of my teachers to get attention. The attention that I really wanted was that of a pretty blonde girl named Laura who I had been trying to impress for three years and was working myself up to ask out.

The courage came when I learned that my family was moving again. My father is a pediatric neurologist, and due to the specialist nature of his job, he had to follow the job offers. I had switched schools in third grade, but this move devastated me. We had been living in St. Louis; our move to Madison, Wisconsin, promised to be cold and depressing. I went out to the community pool with Laura once before we left. It would be a long time before I felt that good about myself again.

Seventh grade seemed to be the worst year of my life. My new school was five times bigger than my last one. I was scared and lonely, and my brave facade got me into lots of fights. I missed 80-some days of school that year; my mom excused my absences out of pity. My only friend was a guy from Wales who had been home schooled. We were both angry because we were in a place that was new, and we had no other friends but each other. The next year, our parents enrolled us both in a smaller private Catholic school. My recreational reading was lots of philosophy and political theory. I was rabidly anti-establishment, and I avidly read any anarchist literature I could find. Being really disturbed and unhappy, I still couldn't reconcile my anger with my loneliness and need for companionship.

I am now attending the University of Montana in Missoula, where I am majoring in philosophy.... After taking a good look at where I've been, I realize how much I've learned in just a few years—and that I still have a long journey ahead.

Eighth grade passed, and I continued into the Catholic high school. Still very angry, I began using drugs and drinking to escape my situation. My academic performance dropped, and eventually I was thrown out after the first quarter of my sophomore year. At the public high school, my drinking and drug use increased as I spent days away from home partying and living in squalor. My home life was a hell of shouting matches, threats, and violent outbursts. At a loss for how to reach me, my folks sent me away after Christmas to live and work on my grandparents' farm in Virginia. During this time, my emotions ranged only from anger to depression and back again. I had no friends and no one to talk to; I was violent and anti-authority.

All that spring I worked, developing my prior love of farming and absorbing a new hobby—restoring

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Secretary of the Army Proposes Opening Recruitment Slots to More GED Graduates

by Kathleen Halverson

Army Secretary Louis Caldera recently proposed that the Department of Defense (DoD) allow the Army to recruit more GED graduates. Such action would alter the recruiting standards adopted just five years ago. "Not having graduated from high school shouldn't be a bar from military service if you can subsequently demonstrate that you have the desire and the ability to be successful," Caldera told the *Washington Post* in February.

Caldera advocates a plan that permits the Army to recruit more GED graduates and that allows the Army to adopt alternative ways of testing a potential recruit's abilities. "The military should not be the one that slams the door of opportunity in your face," said Caldera, noting that since colleges and universities accept GED graduates, the military should, too. "Frankly, right now we have rules that don't make sense," Caldera told the *Post*. These rules have "put us in a box that really hurts. Every day we turn away people who want to join."

Despite the fact that 1.3 million people become eligible for military service every year, in the first quarter of fiscal year 1999, the Army was 2,300 short of its recruiting goal. The Army projects a shortfall of as many as 10,000 soldiers this year. The projected shortfall reflects the rising concern of the Army, Navy, and Air Force that they are not attracting enough young recruits and that the shortage will increase if they do not take the appropriate steps. In recent years, only the Marine Corps has been meeting its recruitment targets.

Factors contributing to the shortage of recruits include a strong economy, fewer surviving military veterans to act as role models for their children, and a perceived lack of adventure as the armed services operate in a post-Cold War world with no definite "enemy." Caldera does not support reinstating the draft, a measure advocated by some members of Congress if the United States continues to see shortfalls in military enrollment. Instead, he recommended that the Army select more GED graduates with qualities that match the military's needs.

"Not having graduated from high school shouldn't be a bar from military service if you can subsequently demonstrate that you have the desire and the ability to be successful."

–Louis Caldera
Secretary of the Army

Current DoD policy allows 10 percent of new recruits to be high school dropouts who have earned their GED and scored high on military entrance exams; however, in

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GED Improves Lives, Colorado Survey Reports

by Sen Qi

Two out of three Colorado GED graduates are currently working toward college degrees, according to a report published by the state's Department of Education in the fall of 1998.

The purpose of the survey was to answer the ultimate accountability question: What difference does the GED program make in the lives of Colorado residents? The questionnaire was designed to identify direct benefits to GED graduates in the state of Colorado by asking them a variety of questions, including their reasons for taking the GED Tests, further education goals, employment status, and psychological benefits. This comprehensive survey is the most recent state-level study of its kind and is similar to those done in Iowa and Pennsylvania a few years ago. It reflects a trend of state-level studies that may be most responsive to the increasing needs for information by policymakers at the jurisdiction level—and most sensitive to local political and economic environments.

In 1996, the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative of the Office of Adult Education conducted a follow-up survey of more than 328 GED graduates one year after they passed the Tests in 1995. Efforts were made to ensure that the survey sample represented as many racial and ethnic groups as possible. Most of those contacted (235) responded to the survey, resulting in a return rate of 70 percent—a remarkably high rate for surveys of this type.

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Key Findings of the Colorado GED Graduate Survey

Educational and Employment Status

- Two of three GED graduates are currently working toward college degrees.
- One of three GED graduates are receiving on-the-job training.
- Almost half of all GED graduates reported that they found paid employment, changed to other jobs, earned a promotion, or performed their jobs better.

Personal Finances

- Two of five GED graduates reported improvements in their personal finances, such as receiving a raise or becoming a homeowner.

Education and Cultural Activities

- Two of three GED graduates encouraged others to stay in school, prepare for the GED Tests, or pursue other educational opportunities.
- Two of five GED graduates spent more time keeping up with current events.
- One of five GED graduates obtained library cards for themselves or a child or used libraries more frequently.

Community Participation

- One of five GED graduates registered to vote.
- One of five GED graduates began attending or attended more local events, such as festivals, fairs, benefits, or walks.

Health and Psychological Benefits

- Two of three GED graduates set more realistic goals for their future and were more satisfied with life.
- Two of five reported feeling more open to change.
- One of three said that they understood themselves better and did better at solving problems in their lives.
- Almost one of three did more to prevent poor health, such as starting to diet or exercise.
- One of five respondents reported going more regularly for medical and dental checkups.

Lance, K. C., and D. Bates. *Colorado GED Study: How Colorado Graduates Benefit from Passing the GED Tests.* Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education, 1998.

Graduation Ceremony, from page 1

SPSCC sweatshirt. Such incentives motivate inmates to work very hard for these prizes.

One of the greatest incentives is the graduation ceremony itself. The correctional facility's kitchen staff furnishes the refreshments; guest speakers appear, and each inmate who has qualified for a Washington State high school equivalency diploma receives an invitation. Each graduate is photographed in cap and gown receiving his or her diploma, and the pictures are sent to the inmate's family members. Most of these men and women had never dreamed they would be photographed in a cap and gown.

Although the refreshments are a big draw, Ashley-duVerglas believes that what the inmates truly value is the recognition for doing something right. "We started asking the graduates to say a few words about their achievement, and that's when the floodgates really opened. They made statements that revealed their pride, such as, 'Now my own kids will have a parent who graduated. I'll never let them quit school.' Another graduate told me, 'I've finally done something my mom can brag about.'"

Now, with a measure of success behind them, some inmates want to continue their education but don't know how to go about doing it. It is important to remember that these people did not have the counseling available to traditional high school juniors and seniors. They asked SPSCC GED Examiners if they could get some information about college and trade schools.

"We started asking the graduates to say a few words about their achievement... They revealed their pride, such as 'Now my kids have a parent who graduated. I'll never let them quit school.'"

–Crystal Ashley-duVerglas
SPSCC Adult Basic Education teacher

In response, SPSCC developed a program in which an advisor and a financial aid officer travel to the correctional facility each quarter to assist inmates with paperwork and to answer their questions about higher education. One area near the Thurston County Correctional Facility's GED testing room has been set up as a college information center, offering single-sheet program descriptions, school catalogues, and the necessary admission and financial aid application. With access to this information, inmates can begin to make plans for a positive future. For many, it is their first taste of success, reward, and positive interaction with the educational community.

The cooperation and enthusiasm of the staff at Thurston County Correctional Facility is also a reason for the GED program's success. For example, inmates who score high on their tests and complete their program are acknowledged on the facility's closed-circuit television and praised by the staff for their efforts.

The young man who is rushing from the Counseling Center to the Financial Aid Office appears to be just another student, but the GED Examiners at SPSCC know the odds he had to overcome to get here. And when we see him or any of the GED graduates from the correctional facility on campus, we know that what we're seeing is success.

Wilma Lisk is the GED Chief Examiner at South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia, Washington.

Army Standards, from page 4

practice the services actually are more rigorous in their requirements, either requiring a high school diploma or accepting only a few recruits with equivalency diplomas.

As downsizing has slowed and the economy has strengthened, fewer young people have pursued an interest in military service. To combat this shortage of recruits, the armed services have offered incentives such as signing and retention bonuses, and boosted financial assistance for college. They have added thousands of recruiters to the ranks and implemented new advertising campaigns. Caldera says that in addition to an ad campaign, they are also working on a strategy to appeal to the patriotism of high school students and young adults and stressing education as an important key to their future.

Caldera, who took over as Army secretary in July, is an attorney and former member of the California legislature. He indicated that the long-term solution entails more than money and advertising. Civilian leaders have failed to advocate civic responsibility to the new generation, Caldera told the *San Antonio Express News*. "There are young people out there who are hungry for someone to talk to them about responsibility."

Kathleen Halverson is the Managing Editor of GED Items.

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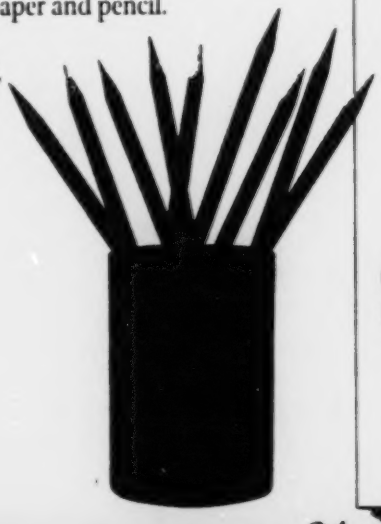

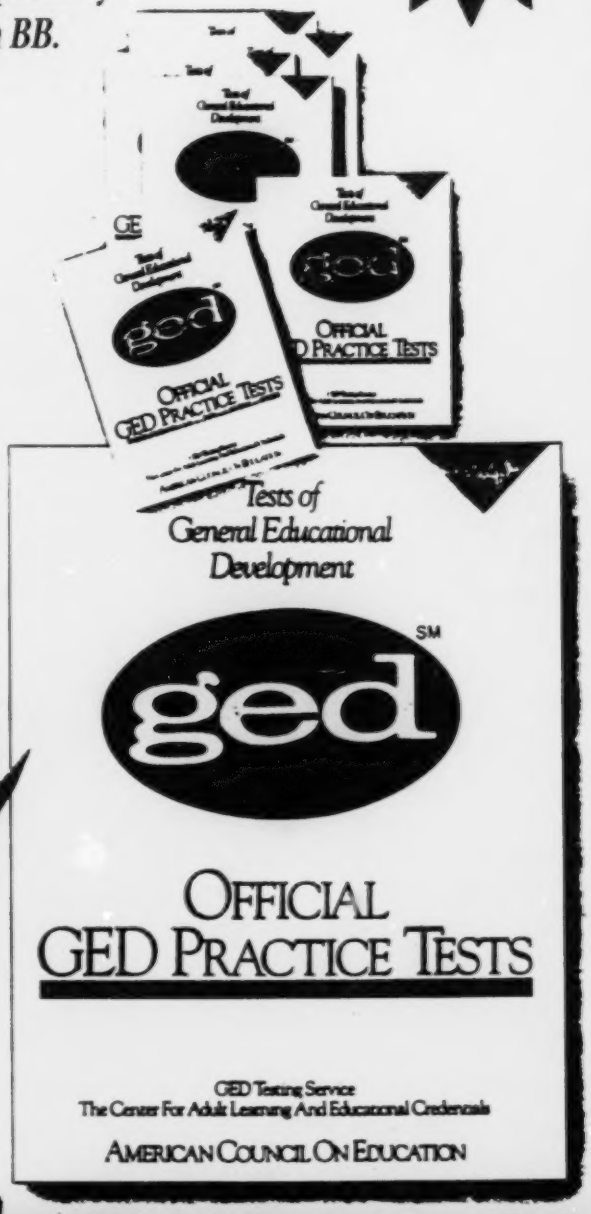

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Formulaic Writing: Blueprint for Mediocrity

by Art Halbrook

On the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, I had been passing alone with pencil through a singularly dreary stack of repetitive essays and within time found myself asking, "Where is that introduction that grabs you and asks you to enter? And once you enter, where is that composition that pulls you forward, that provides insight on the topic discussed, that has a distinctive voice and purpose?"

Good questions that deserve good answers. True, writing an essay in Part II of the Writing Skills Test is done under time constraints and true, creativity is limited in order to get the words onto the page within the time limit, but should an intriguing introduction be sacrificed? As I slogged on through the other essays in the pile, I discovered another anomaly: They all were basically the same. Thirty essays from the same testing center written on several different topics—all having essentially the same structure. My curiosity now aroused, I examined the compositions in more detail, searching further for new treasures.

The essays did bear remarkable similarities. The writing was neither good nor bad but rather a grouping of words brought together to form what could be regarded as an essay. Each began with a well-developed topic sentence such as, "The essay which I am about to write," or "The topic which I will discuss," and ended with that dynamic culminating statement, "In the final conclusion, I believe." Interestingly, most of the essays had the same number of paragraphs—five. It appeared that disregarding this rule, apparently provided by the ancients, would invoke the wrath of some demi-god of rhetoric. I was even more enamored with the variety of transitional words the writers had selected to begin each successive paragraph—"First," "Second," and "Third" respectively. Such insightful beginnings certainly keep one anxiously anticipating the text to follow.

Teaching writing is not wholly about format and a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather about the generation of text that effectively communicates, that showcases the writer as communicator.

My search continued.

Examining other essays, I found that several writers had spread their literary wings. Rather than use "First," "Second," and "Third," as paragraph beginnings, I had discovered a group of essays in which the paragraphs started with "Next," "Next," and "Next." Such rich writing could only lead to one conclusion: All these essays suffered from the same affliction—the curse of formulaic writing.

What is formulaic writing?

Closely akin to relying on a cookbook that holds only one recipe, formulaic instruction focuses on an important goal—to serve as a foundation for beginning writers. Rather than working with those rhetorical elements with which a writer builds, the instruction centers on developing enough knowledge of paragraph development and organization to produce the required written piece.

In examining the motivations for using such an approach, several may be noted but one seems most pervasive. Faced with a specific writing assessment, instructors rely on the famous and often-applied "quick fix." Mindful that most of their students have limited writing skills and that teaching writing is an involved process for which time is limited, many instructors fall back on the tried-and-true outline to writing.

Accordingly, the writers learn to follow several very general rules. For instance, included in this methodology might be: restating the topic in one's opening paragraph, having a specific number of paragraphs in the essay, providing several specific examples to support one's thesis, having a predetermined number of sentences in each paragraph, and using transitions (in place of phrases, "next," "and next," "and finally" will do). Another skill advocated in such an approach frequently involves the restatement of the first paragraph in the final paragraph.

However, what is most unique is that this formula to writing regularly ignores the two most important elements to developing a piece of writing: audience and purpose. Without consideration of these aspects, a narrative topic may prompt an essay that appears more expository than narrative; a topic

continued on page 9

Teaching Tips, from page 8

that asks the writer to describe an event frequently results in an essay that approaches the persuasive mode.

Essentially, the resulting essay is an amorphous piece of writing, a hybrid product loosely defined as an essay only because it has sentences, paragraph divisions, and a beginning, middle, and end. Seldom does the writer take chances with language. The sentence structure is predictable—oftentimes simplistic—and, in most instances, the essay lacks individuality.

Avoiding the template of formulaic writing is not simple. The will to see students clear the hurdle can be a powerful driving force. Nonetheless, the instructor must first recognize that teaching writing is not wholly about format and a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather about the generation of text that effectively communicates, that showcases the writer as communicator rather than a slave to form. Secondly, the instructor must perceive that to write and write well, the writer must be able to develop a variety of approaches. However, perhaps most significantly, the instructor must be able to make the writer realize that written communication is more than words placed together on a page.

Formulaic writing is not altogether inappropriate. For those who are learning to write and need structure and organization to bring their sentences together into a coherent whole, formulaic writing is a good foundation on which to build. It is when formulaic writing is seen as the end, rather than a means, that a great disservice results. Instead of fostering the ability to write effectively for different audiences and varied purposes, the skills of formulaic writing leave the learner fixed in time, shackled to a form that denies that individual the ability to grow and communicate as a writer, to establish a voice, to develop writing, and, most importantly, to be empowered by the knowledge that one's true thoughts, well-expressed, have made an impression on the reader.

As the Writing Assessment Specialist for the GED Testing Service, Arthur M. Halbrook, Ph.D., is responsible for the development of "Test 1: The Writing Skills Test" and for training and monitoring the accuracy of trained essay readers.

Art was recently invited to serve a three-year term as a member of the Commission on Composition for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). We congratulate Art for this prestigious honor.

Colorado Survey, from page 5

The response rate was achieved by implementing three factors into the survey design: postage-paid return envelopes, a five-dollar reward to those who responded, and a second follow-up mailing.

As a small, "self-reported" survey, the Colorado study has its limitations. However, the results reconfirm previous findings about the positive impact of a GED diploma on adults who did not finish high school. The study adds to existing evidence of the personal satisfaction experienced by most GED graduates and their increased engagement in educational activities. This study also covered some areas in which very little, if any, research has been previously conducted. For example, the survey instrument asked graduates to indicate whether changes had taken place in their cultural and community activity levels and their awareness of health care issues. Some key findings are listed in the box on page five.

As the authors of the survey report pointed out: "The intergenerational benefits of passing the GED Tests... may be the most powerful and enduring benefits of all." A generation of GED graduates "who are more supportive of educational success and participation of extracurricular activities may be all it takes to break the generational cycle of failure to complete school." The Colorado Literacy Research Initiative reports that it plans to study family literacy programs to address that very issue. We look forward to sharing their findings with the readers of *GED Items*.

Sen Qi is the Research and Policy Analyst for the GED Testing Service.

GEDTS is interested in your research about your GED graduates—please forward information to:

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From the Director, *from page 2*

On February 19th and 20th, I had my third and most traditional master class when I attended a meeting on the psychometric design of the 2001 GED Tests. Our standing panel of five psychometric experts met a second time to review the content subcommittees' revisions to the original test specifications. (For those of you awaiting the final design of the new tests, we will have new information on our web page in April.) Imagine having the opportunity to listen to a debate about alternate item formats and calculator use between Tom Fisher, an expert responsible for the Assessment and Evaluation Services Section of the Florida Department of Education, and Susan Phillips, an authority on legal policy issues in testing, program evaluation, and special education law. Follow that discussion with one concerning sample design and item response theory models among Huynh Huynh, an expert in psychometric theory and applications and member of the External Technical Advisory Committee for the Voluntary National Tests; Gary Phillips, whose experience includes overseeing the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) project and the International Assessment program; and Gary Skaggs, a specialist in large-scale assessment, equating and linking, and item response theory. Each time I attend one of these meetings, I am awed by the level of knowledge exchanged among these national experts. I also am convinced that the 2001-series GED Tests will remain a valid and reliable assessment instrument.

It is appropriate that master classes in lifelong learning are not always planned and are not always held in traditional settings. Each of you as adult education and literacy providers lead daily master classes, both planned and extemporaneous. I always appreciate the opportunity to learn from such masters as Debra Kimbler, Jean De Vard-Kemp, Kim Lee, Tom Fisher, Susan Phillips, Gary Phillips, Huynh Huynh, and Gary Skaggs. Be prepared! When you are not expecting it, someone may be listening and learning from you. I look forward to traveling to your hometown and attending your master class.

High-Scoring GED Grad, *from page 3*

and rebuilding automobiles. With help from my uncle, I bought a VW "Bug" for $100 at a Goodwill auction. We got it running, and at sixteen, with a new driver's license, I drove it back to Wisconsin in the fall. I had mixed feelings about returning to my family, but now they were living ten miles out of town in another school district. Soon, my old habits reasserted themselves and I missed another 80 days of school that year. During my senior year, I regularly showed up to only three classes: acting, ceramics, and welding. More often than not, I was stoned at school. After football season ended, I showed up even less, partying instead. All my grades were low or incomplete. Needless to say, I was not on the track to graduation.

The next summer, my family was moving to Boston, so I returned to Virginia to live on the farm and attend the local high school. I wasn't allowed to play football there, and I was so full of anxiety that I had to drink beer before school just to relax enough to show up. The only class that I ever attended was Mrs. Marshall's philosophy class. I loved her class, but it simply wasn't enough. On the weekends, my friends and I were going to parties at the nearby University of Virginia and drinking heavily. That November, I assaulted a police officer who was arresting me for underage drinking. After spending fifteen days in jail, I dropped out of high school for good.

That spring, I started taking auto mechanics and pottery classes at the community college. I was still depressed, but I attended all my classes and learned all about automobiles. That summer, I took the GED Tests and the SAT. I received a plaque for the highest GED scores in Virginia, and my SAT scores were good, too (740 on English, 1310 overall). During that summer, I worked as a mechanic and a welder, and in the fall of 1997, my old friend from Wales and I went to Australia. There, I refined some of my current hobbies: surfing; playing guitar, banjo, and harmonica; weight lifting; and dancing.

After six months in Australia and New Zealand, I returned to the states and joined my family in Boston. During this spring semester, I am attending the University of Montana in Missoula, where I am majoring in philosophy, writing poetry and music, and taking dance classes. After writing this article and taking a good look at where I've been, I realize how much I've learned in just a few years—and I realize that I still have a long journey ahead.

James Rust earned a total score of 393 on the GED Tests—a score that places him high in the 99th percentile of the high school senior norm group.

Survey on Customer Service Coming Soon

Don't be surprised if the next time the phone rings at your testing center, the voice on the other end of the line is Cheryl Roberts!

Beginning in mid-March, and running through the end of the year, the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) will be conducting an outbound phone survey. On a daily basis, Cheryl will be contacting Testing Centers to check on how we are doing. Cheryl (spellchecker comes up with "Cheery" when checking her name) is the Client Services Coordinator, and for those of you who call the GED main number, you know her voice well!

Please Comment!

Cheryl will be asking just a few questions to find out how you are being served by GEDTS and where we can improve. Please take a few minutes and answer her questions. This is your opportunity to help us improve customer service and to let GEDTS know what issues are important to you. We promise it won't take more than a few minutes, and your input will help us to better serve you. It is our belief that there is always room for improvement, and we are counting on you to let us know your needs.

We'll report back to you in future issues of *GED Items* on the responses we receive and the measures we're taking to improve. Until then, it's been good talking with you!

President Proposes More Adult Education Dollars

Speaking before adult learners at the Lucent Technologies/AT&T Training Facility in Oakton, Virginia, on January 28, President Clinton announced a new adult education initiative contained in his FY 2000 budget proposal. Lucent offers workplace literacy, GED, and other training programs to its employees. The President's proposal includes a $95 million increase to expand adult education grants to states and to help state and local programs improve program quality. He also proposed $70 million in competitive grants to expand access to programs that link English language instruction with civics and life skills instruction; $23 million to subsidize technology for adult learners; and $2 million for a "High Skills Communities" campaign to promote adult basic education. Under the plan, communities would receive $500,000 awards for achieving concrete results, and a 10 percent Workplace Education Tax Credit would be awarded to employers who provide workplace literacy, English literacy, and basic education programs for their eligible employees.

Children's Reading Guide Available

Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success is a new publication available for teachers and parents in family literacy programs. To purchase copies, call (800) 624-6242, or point your web browser to http://www.nap.edu.

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"When assessing the state of the art of adult literacy instruction, all the roads lead to KET."
from TELEVISION AND ADULT LITERACY, a Ford Foundation report

International GED Testing Program Going Strong

In October 1997, the GED Testing Service and Sylvan Prometric, a division of Sylvan Learning Systems, agreed to make the GED Tests available on computer outside the U.S. and Canada. The process of computerizing the tests followed and in May 1998, Sylvan's first GED test-taker sat down at a terminal in Mexico City.

Since then, hundreds of computerized GED Tests have been administered around the world. Most of the testing volume is concentrated in Asia, Europe, and the Latin American/Caribbean countries, but interest is increasing in the United Arab Emirates and the Middle East.

About 85 percent of international GED candidates take the GED Tests to advance their education either in the U.S. or other countries. "Some candidates tell us that they're not sure exactly how they'll use their GED diploma right now, but feel compelled to earn it given the move toward a global economy," says Mary Reynolds, the International GED Administrator.

Admissions officers of U.S. institutions have been enthusiastic with the re-emergence of the international GED program. Since educational systems vary widely from country to country, admissions staff were often hard-pressed to assess foreign-educated candidates' academic credentials. The GED offers a familiar, reliable measure of a candidate's academic achievement in specific subject areas and an additional measure of English language proficiency since these GED Tests are available in English only.

The first year of international testing has gone very smoothly, reports Amy Richards, Sylvan's Program Manager. "We're delighted with the technical and operational success of the international GED program. We wanted to make the difference between taking the GED Tests on computer as similar as possible to the paper and pencil version."

Sylvan is improving the program, based on candidates' suggestions. GED testing now takes place in two sessions instead of five. In part one, the candidate takes Writing Skills and Interpreting Literature and the Arts. At the second session, he or she takes Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The state of Maine issues its diploma to the candidates who pass the tests.

For more information on the international GED program, visit the Sylvan Prometric website at http://www.prometric.com.

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Successful Graduates Say Determination and GED Diploma Opened Future Possibilities

Appliance Repairman Overcomes Illness, Earns GED and New Job

by George E. Aalto

For twenty-five years, Manuel Zuniga was a successful major appliance repairman. Then misfortune struck. Manuel had to terminate his lifelong career when he started to lose his vision due to diabetic retinopathy. He needed to find other work that he could perform.

In addition to his vision loss, Manuel faced the additional vocational challenge of not having his high school diploma. Since he dropped out of school in the sixth grade, he lacked what most employers consider to be the basic academic credentials to successfully pursue other gainful employment. He first contacted the Literacy Program at the William Judson Center of the San Antonio Lighthouse in October 1996. Understandably, Manuel was despondent over his vision and career losses. Manuel's vocational rehabilitation counselor at the Texas Commission for the Blind advised him to work on earning his GED diploma.

As if these problems were not enough, Manuel had to use a wheelchair for mobility due to his diabetes. A concern of Manuel's was this: Could accommodations be made for his GED preparation and testing? The staff at the William Judson Center assured him that he could be accommodated. They had converted the GED preparation materials (and other adult education materials) into large print, braille, and audiocassette tapes, and the building was fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

With limited vision and impaired hand dexterity due to his diabetes, Manuel had to study his lessons on tape and record many of his exercise and test answers. Despite these obstacles, he became a serious, hardworking student.

Manuel required foot surgery because of his diabetes and eventually had one toe removed. A special orthotic shoe was designed and built to allow him to walk with the use of a support cane.

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From GED Diploma to College Position, Researcher Advocates Community Involvement

by Kathleen Halverson

"I really don't feel that I am a special case, though perhaps a bit more stubborn than some others. I haven't done anything more in life than most anyone else can or has."

Don't let her modesty fool you. Sandra Ceto, of Malta, Illinois, definitely has a story worth sharing. Overcoming poverty and poor education, she earned her GED diploma and went on to earn an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree. Academic scholarships and graduate fellowships helped Sandra with the financial end of things. The challenges of being a nontraditional student and mother of three were to Sandra things she simply had to deal with. "It's part of life," she says.

Sandra's continuous quest for education paid off. As director of institutional research and reports at Kishwaukee Community College, Sandra writes reports and conducts campus-wide research. She is a well-respected professional, active on campus and known for her contributions to the community. Sandra was instrumental in establishing an

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Manuel started the long journey to his GED high school equivalency diploma in June 1997. With limited vision and impaired hand dexterity due to his diabetes, he had to study his lessons on tape and record many of his exercise and test answers. Despite these obstacles, he became a serious, hardworking student. During eight months of daily study, he had perfect attendance for three months and missed only one class during each of three other months.

In addition to his blindness, Manuel has overcome multiple disabilities and significant obstacles to achieve his independence.

After preparing himself academically, Manuel began taking his GED Tests at nearby St. Philips College, where the GED Testing Center staff understood and met the needs of persons with disabilities. They provided an exceptional level of service. The college's Student Support Services office assigned Manuel a scribe to write down his test answers. Manuel passed the first four parts of the GED Tests but didn't score quite high enough on the final test to pass. He didn't let this setback deter him. Manuel studied harder and soon passed that fifth and final test. Manuel earned his GED certificate on February 2, 1998. Through the San Antonio Lighthouse's Work Adjustment and On-the-Job Training programs, Manuel relearned how to perform general and specific work-related tasks. While attending the Lighthouse's On-the-Job Training, a job opened in the company's maintenance department. Manuel felt that he was qualified for that position but was concerned that his low vision would knock him out of the running. Manuel applied, and the Lighthouse hired him for the maintenance position, where he now works full time.

In addition to his blindness, Manuel has overcome multiple disabilities and significant obstacles to achieve his independence. ▲

George E. Aalto is the literacy program coordinator at the William Judson Center of the San Antonio Lighthouse. The program serves persons who are visually impaired and blind with classes in GED, English as a Second Language (ESL), basic education, and braille. George Aalto can be reached at (210) 533-5195 or by e-mail at: george@salighthouse.org.

GEDTS Staff Changes

Welcome Cherryl Donahue and Kenneth Pendleton

The GED Testing Servie (GEDTS) welcomes Cherryl Donahue to the post of administrative assistant, Test Development Unit. Previously, Cherryl served in posts with the Poverty and Race Research Action Council, the Community Information Exchange, and the American Association of Retired Persons. Cherryl can be reached at (202) 939-9489 or via e-mail at cherryl_donahue@ace.nche.edu.

GEDTS also welcomes Kenneth L. Pendleton to the post of mathematics test specialist. Kenn has 30 years' experience as a mathematics instructor in the Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools, where he taught algebra, geometry, pre-calculus, and AP statistics; developed curriculum; wrote and edited textbooks; and designed the school district's mathematics final examinations. Kenn says that he is pleased to serve with GEDTS, as one of his children is a GED graduate. Kenn can be reached at (202) 939-9498 or via e-mail at kenn_pendleton@ace.nche.edu.

Congratulations to Cathy Allin

Cathy Allin, formerly operations coordinator for GEDTS, joined the Database/Program Support group within ACE's College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT). CREDIT reviews workplace training and education and recommends college credit for those programs that meet their criteria. We are certain that those of you who know Cathy join us in missing her special talents and in wishing her success in this new position. ▲

WINNER
APEX'98
AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE

GED *Items* (ISSN 0896-0518) is published bimonthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE). GED *Items* is not copyrighted. Readers are invited to copy any articles not previously copyrighted. Credit should be given in accordance with accepted publishing standards.

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New Hampshire Program Provides GED Instruction, Practical Skills to Young Adults

by Robin Sawler Foley

It is BRIDGE graduation night at the Upper Room in Derry, New Hampshire. The Teen Center is gaily decorated with green and white streamers and filled with excited families, friends, and Upper Room staff members. Two toddlers are here to see their mothers graduate.

As "Pomp and Circumstance" begins, the waiting students become more serious. Dressed in green and white caps and gowns, they file in. This is an event that these students, ages 17 to 21, thought they would never experience. They began their journey five months ago when they signed up for BRIDGE, a GED preparation program especially designed for out-of-school youth. I often think of it as a "bridge over troubled water" because for many of my students, it is.

Founded in 1986, the Upper Room, Education for Parenting, Inc., is an educational not-for-profit corporation. Its mission is to strengthen individuals, families, and the community through interactive educational programs and services. The Upper Room's first GED program started ten years ago to meet the needs of teen mothers who had left school. Later, the Upper Room added a GED program for adjudicated youth. The programs were successful for a few years but then closed due to funding cuts. The BRIDGE Program was funded in 1997 by the Job Training Partnership Act of 1992 (JTPA), through the New Hampshire Job Training Council. Students in the program come to the Upper Room every day to prepare for the GED Tests, gain life skills, and select a career path that will lead to an opportunity for them to be successful in work.

When I first met my students in September, I quickly assessed the group who would become "my kids" for the next few months. They came from various backgrounds and situations: teen mothers, court-ordered youth, and others who, because of their age, no longer felt comfortable with the idea of attending traditional high school. Some had dropped out in ninth grade—others, just months away from graduation. Many students had learning difficulties, and others had incredibly negative attitudes.

After school and on weekends, students intern with businesses in the community. Placement in occupational settings is designed to meet the students' interests, skills, and career choices.

Every morning, BRIDGE students attend my class geared toward GED preparation, independent living, and pre-employment skills. Many spend the afternoon developing their skills in the Upper Room's computer lab, funded by the Ronald McDonald House. After school and on weekends, students intern with businesses in the community. Placement in occupational settings is designed to meet the students' interests, skills, and career choices.

I begin by treating each student as an individual. My training in school counseling prepared me for what has become my personal mantra during many difficult moments: "unconditional positive regard . . . unconditional positive regard . . . unconditional positive regard." And guess what? It works! Some days, academics become secondary to participatory problem solving for all of life's difficulties. Even so, the concrete challenges of negotiating family life, child care, transportation, internships, and jobs fall to our case manager. The goal is to minimize these distractions so that students can physically and mentally attend school each day. The case manager arranges rides to school, takes the kids to court, and everything in between.

Working in a multilevel classroom is a constant balancing act between moving too fast for some, too slow for others; but there are activities that can help bridge these differences. We read the newspaper together and discuss current events. Along the way, students begin to take an interest in reading; we take a field trip to the public library and explore the stacks. Students learn new math skills and sharpen weak ones; we go shopping to test their skills with practical application. We read and discuss geography and history; each student gives a presentation on a country of his or her choice. Most are nervous about speaking in front of a group, but they find our group environment safe enough to take the risk. Some even prepare ethnic food for the class.

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BRIDGE, *from page 3*

We work on life skills every day, and we talk about and practice various social skills. We look for job openings, fill out applications, and write resumes and cover letters. Later, we videotape mock interviews and critique them. Together we attend a local job fair and talk to employers. After students go out on their own interviews, they report their experiences back to the class.

Interaction with speakers from the community and participants in other programs provides additional strength. This semester, the students participated in intergenerational activities with students in the Upper Room's computer job training program for adults aged 55 and older. Students also take part in activities offered in the Teen Center, an educational resource providing after-school and Friday evening activities. For the students, BRIDGE is more than academics and job readiness. The Upper Room becomes a second home to them. The staff is caring and compassionate, whether they work directly with the students or play a supporting role.

Students in the program come to the Upper Room every day to prepare for the GED Tests, gain life skills, and select a career path that will lead to an opportunity for them to be successful in work.

School as we generally think of it is not a culture into which these young people fit. I constantly keep that in mind, and I work to recreate the paradigm of "school." In the end, the students discover that learning and school can be fun. We send them out into the community stronger and better prepared to be independent, successful adults. ▲

Robin Foley is the instructor of the BRIDGE Program at the Upper Room in Derry, New Hampshire. She holds an M.S. in school counseling from Fitchburg State College in Massachusetts. To contact Robin, call (603) 437-8477.

Scholarships for GED Graduates

by Melissa Smith

Sixty-seven percent of GED test-takers intend to go onto post-secondary programs to further their education—the question is: How to pay for it? Many scholarship programs allow GED graduates to be considered on the same tier as traditional high school graduates.

The Delta College Foundation in University Center, Michigan, helps raise funds for more than thirty scholarships and endowments administered through the college. Many of the Foundation's scholarships and endowments include GED graduates as possible recipients. For more information about scholarships available to GED graduates, contact the Delta College Foundation at (517) 686-9224. ▲

Melissa Smith is program coordinator for the Center for Adult Learning's Marketing and Communications Department.

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GEDTS Remembers Larry Goodwin, Pennsylvania GED Administrator

by Cathy Allin

Larry Goodwin, the GED Administrator for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, died March 6, 1999, from the effects of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), often known as Lou Gehrig's disease. ALS is a fatal neurological disorder characterized by progressive degeneration of motor cells in the spinal cord and brain. Despite his illness, Larry worked every day until March 3, and he regularly touched base with staff at the GED Testing Service, sharing sage advice and often sending jokes via e-mail. He leaves his wife Jeanne and three children: Melissa, Brad, and Susannah.

GED Executive Director Joan Auchter told the Goodwins that she valued the guidance Larry provided the GED program: "He was the first person to volunteer to help, and he always sent summary e-mail messages of insight and wisdom that surpassed the content of our meetings."

Before joining the GED program, Larry served in the U.S. Army for twenty-eight years. Retiring with the rank of Colonel, he was a highly decorated veteran whose career included two tours in Vietnam. Among Larry's military awards were the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal for valor and service, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

Larry was proud of the GED program and particularly proud that he had been honored for his distinguished service as a GED Administrator during the 1998 GED Administrators' Conference in Chicago, Illinois. He came to Chicago to accept the award against the advice of friends who expressed concern about the toll such a trip might take on his body. When colleagues pointed out to him that he was now, after all, "handicapped," Larry responded with typical good humor and fortitude: "I'm not handicapped; I don't have a parking space!" Shortly after the conference, he was also awarded Pennsylvania's Citation of Merit by the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

The memorial service at the U.S. Army War College Memorial Chapel in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, was filled to standing room only; Larry also served that congregation as the Superintendent of Sunday Schools. Among those who offered words of remembrance was Dr. Michael Poliakoff, Pennsylvania's deputy secretary of education for higher and continuing education. Dr. Poliakoff announced the establishment of the Lawrence B. Goodwin, Jr. Scholarship. The scholarship will be awarded each year to the one person in Pennsylvania who earns the highest GED score after having attended preparation classes. ▲

Cathy Allin was the operations coordinator with the GED Testing Service. She is now part of the Database/Program Support group with the College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT), another division of the American Council on Education (ACE).

***Successful Grads**, from page 1*

agency that assists rural residents living with HIV and AIDS. In honor of her commitment, the State of Illinois recently presented Sandra with the First Annual Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) AIDS Service Organization Award. "Many of the clients we serve are at poverty level, with little to no education. I know what that's like—I was there."

"If it were not for passing the GED Tests in December 1979, none of this would have been possible. My life probably would have been spent raising my family in poverty and potentially burdening the welfare system. . . . I feel very strongly about this important tool by which people can change or rebuild their lives."

Sandra left high school as a junior in favor of a minimum wage job to help support her family. She then married and had children of her own. In 1979, she noticed an ad for GED instruction in the local newspaper. As a young wife and mother, Sandra realized that her high school diploma was something she needed to have. "I became aware that it was important to me to do something. I realized that if I didn't set a good example, I couldn't tell my children, 'You can do anything you want to do.'"

Sandra responded to the GED ad and attended an introductory session, where she took a reading test and did very well. "The kind people and pleasant feedback I received

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***Successful Grads,** from page 5*

were part of why I continued on toward my GED diploma. When you're in that type of situation, you really need a lot of encouragement." After Sandra passed the GED Tests, she realized that the GED diploma was not an end-goal for her, as she once thought; it was a path to something greater. She wanted more, and she saw that she was capable of achieving it. "The self-esteem I gained through the GED preparation classes helped me to continue. I saw that I could have a career where I would be able to use my mind. I had wonderful people who supported me, and I got a lot of positive feedback. I continued to take courses, then one thing led to another."

Overcoming poverty and poor education, Sandra Ceto took her first step toward success when she earned her GED, and from there, she just kept moving—to an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree.

Sandra earned an associate of science degree at Lake Land College in Mattoon, Illinois. She eventually earned a bachelor's degree and then a master's degree in public administration (MPA) at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Sandra speaks highly of SIU because of its commitment to nontraditional students—transportation, free day care, etc. "It was important that I go to a university conducive to adult learners and establish a peer group. As nontraditional students, members of a peer group understand and can relate to your situation."

After graduate school, Sandra's first task was to conduct a needs assessment for HIV/AIDS services to a fifteen-county region in Illinois. Based on the assessment findings, Sandra and her colleagues founded an agency that provides clients with transportation and home-delivered meals, among other services. "Our clients are not only living with HIV and AIDS, but many are poor and have additional mental health issues that need attention," Sandra explains. The agency also offers training to social service providers, medical providers, and school personnel.

Sandra faced challenges in this effort as well. "There were lots of barriers. This rural region first had to be convinced that there were people living with HIV and AIDS in their community. Some people didn't believe that the problem existed so close to home." The successful agency now provides clients with the comforts and necessities they need to survive. And the community has responded. A local church donated Christmas trees to the clients and their families. A local sorority made "back to school baskets" for the children of the families served by the agency. Due in part to Sandra's contributions, the agency is a successful support mechanism for those in need.

Sandra attributes much of her success to earning the GED diploma—that first step in a series of educational progressions that transformed her views about what she could do and the difference that she could make in the world. "This alternative to high school education is critically important for persons who did not complete high school in the traditional manner," Sandra emphasized. "People need help with that first step. I would not have been able to do the things I've done without it."

During the days of simultaneous child-rearing, test-taking, and paper-writing, friends and family members would ask, "Why are you doing this to yourself?" And she'd say, "Because I have to. It's part of life." Considering the alternative—poverty and minimum wage—Sandra welcomed the chance for education. "If it were not for passing the GED Tests in December 1979, my life would have been spent raising my family in poverty and potentially burdening the welfare system. My children would have continued the poverty cycle rather than becoming the productive individuals they are today. I feel very strongly about this important tool by which people can change or rebuild their lives."

"The self-esteem I gained through the GED preparation classes helped me to continue. I saw that I could have a career. . . . I had wonderful people who supported me, and I got a lot of positive feedback. That helped boost my confidence level."

Sandra is an advocate of education and the benefits of the GED diploma—and she's passed that belief on to her children. "We need to get more people involved in education and in making their lives more productive." That process includes using the GED to show people that progress is possible and education is within their reach. "People don't purposefully end up in a situation where they have to take the GED," says Sandra. Sometimes life can take some unexpected turns. She emphasizes the importance of continually showing people that they are capable of taking and passing the GED Tests. Sandra knows all about that—she's been there. ▲

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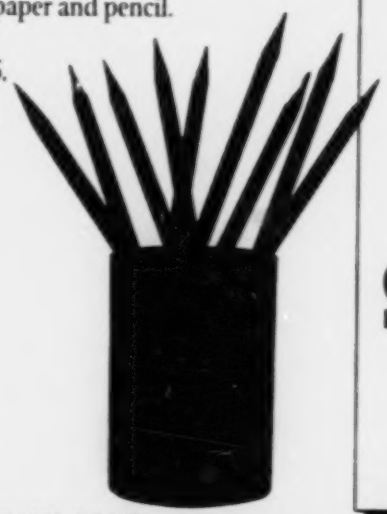

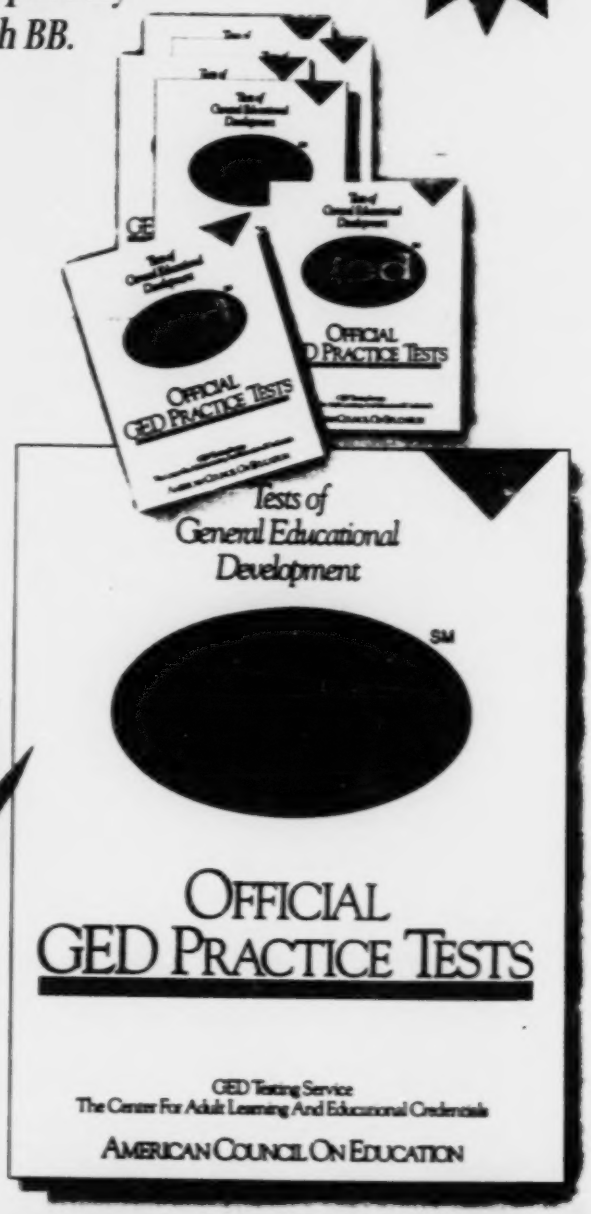
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Visual Processing Skills: A Priority for the 2001 GED Social Studies Test

by Joyce Hoover

Television is the nation's main source of news and entertainment. Newspapers increasingly rely on graphic images to convey information. At work, in postsecondary school, and in training, adults must use computers for reports, research, and presentations. On television and the Internet, in newspapers, magazines, and textbooks, visuals—maps, graphs, charts, diagrams, spreadsheets, cartoons, photos—have become everyone's "executive summaries."

"Executive Summaries"

We are all familiar with executive summaries and how we've come to rely on these brief encapsulations of the key points we need to know about a product, report, or program. The development of visuals into a form of executive summary is understandable if we reflect on how the information at our disposal has grown astronomically over the past fifty years. We have come to depend on more information for our livelihoods and for the good of our families and communities, and it is clear that the amount of information available to us will continue to grow. Visuals—not new to the scene, but here in abundance to stay—harness essential information and quickly make sense of it. Visuals also are often an attempt to engage, entertain, and persuade the viewer.

On the 2001-series Social Studies Test, the percentage of visuals-based questions will increase to between 55 and 60 percent.

GED 2001 Social Studies Test Specifications

About 30 percent of items on the current GED Social Studies Test require examinees to process information in graphic form to answer the question; on the 2001-series test, the percentage of visuals-based questions will increase to between 55 and 60 percent. Included will be maps, graphs, diagrams, charts, tables, political cartoons, advertisements, photographs, and excerpts from practical documents such as manuals, forms, almanacs, atlases, websites, and statistical reports. In several instances, the visuals will appear alongside relevant text.

GED instructors can faciliate preparation by continuing to devote time to reading, using, and evaluating maps, graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, cartoons, and photographs.

The 1997–98 GED Social Studies Test Specifications Committee recommended the increased use of visuals on the test. They based their recommendation on their analysis of the habits of the North American public, the state social studies content standards, and current social studies textbooks and instructional resources. For the last fifteen to twenty years, educational publishers have increased the amount of visual and statistical resources in high school social studies textbooks. These visuals illustrate or complement the written text in the core academic courses of history, geography, civics and government, and economics.

Support from the National Council for the Social Studies

The National Council for the Social Studies standards has identified visual processing skills among those essential for civic participation.[1] That is, to thrive—perhaps to survive—in their social, economic, and civic lives, high school graduates must be able to perform the following tasks with visual or graphic sources:

- Acquire information
- Organize and use information
- Evaluate the quality of information
- Evaluate systems that transmit or primarily rely on visual stimuli

Among the evaluation skills required that GED examinees may find "new" on the GED 2001 Social Studies Test are:

- Understand the relationship of data within a graphic or visual
- Understand the relationship of data in a graphic or visual to data in print or prose
- Detect biases and assumptions in graphs and visuals

Figure 1
Map of the United States

Source: Bruce Jones Design Inc.

Tips for a Plan of Study and Preparation for the Test

GED candidates can prepare themselves and GED instructors can faciliate preparation by continuing to devote time to reading, using, and evaluating maps, graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, cartoons, and photographs. Materials should be from a variety of sources and scopes of interest—world, national, regional, and local. Students need to practice reading and using visuals to understand world, national, regional, and local history; geography; government; and economics—as well as to understand and respond to current events and issues.

Visual Processing and Maps

Each form of the GED 2001 Social Studies Test will include as sources for questions a map of the world or a major region of the world. It will also include a map of the United States, or a map of Canada for the Canadian version of the test (see Figure 1). For starters, examinees will need to know the different types of map projections and their uses, how to "read" the information in the map, how to evaluate a map's quality, the elements of a "good" map, and where to find "good" maps. Current standards call for high school graduates, in the context of a meaningful project, to be able to locate places using scale and computing distance, interpret map symbols and visualize what they mean, and detect any bias in maps. Furthermore, high school graduates are expected to be able to locate the continents, oceans, biomes, and major regions and population centers of the world and of the United States or Canada.

Visual Processing and Graphs, Charts, Tables, and Diagrams

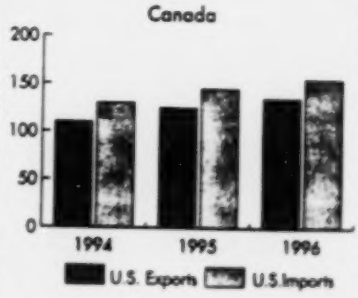
Each form of the GED 2001 Social Studies Test will include at least one bar graph, line graph, or pie chart—most likely one of each—as source material for questions. In addition, each Social Studies test form will include a chart, diagram, or table as the basis for questions. Examinees will need to know how to read and use these important tools designed to condense large amounts of written information into easy-to-read packages.

Adults preparing for the GED Social Studies Test should know the components of "good" graphs, charts, diagrams, and tables. They should be aware that all of these sources can present information accurately, but also can, intentionally or inadvertently, distort information. Bar and line graphs usually have two labels, one that reads across the bottom, or horizontal axis, and one on a line running up and down, the vertical axis (see Figure 2). Bar graphs show amounts at specific time intervals, and line graphs use indicator lines, usually reading from left to right, that show change over time. Pie charts permit a comparison of a whole and its parts by dividing off "slices" in a circle, showing a "whole" and its "parts" in one picture (see Figure 3).

GED examinees must also be able to read tables. Typically, a table has several headings both on its vertical columns and its horizontal rows. Examinees need to know how to locate a specific fact on a table by looking down a column and across the row to the point at which they intersect. Furthermore, examinees must know how to use charts. A flowchart, for example, shows a process, and GED examinees will need to know how to identify the various steps in a process by reading a flowchart.

continued on page 10

Figure 2
North American Trade After NAFTA
U.S.–Canada Merchandise Trade
(in billions of dollars)



Source: *The 1998 Wall Street Journal Almanac*. Ronald J. Alsop, ed. New York: Ballantine Books, 1997.

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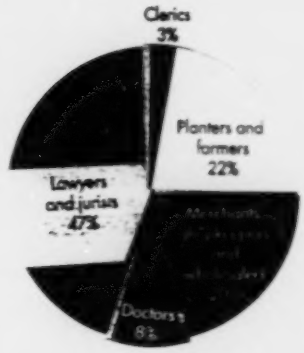
Figure 3
Occupations of American Rebel Leaders
Based on Members of Continental Congress in 1774



Source: Understanding Maps, Charts, and Graphs U.S. History from the Explorers to the Civil War, Teacher's Edition. NY: Scholastic, Inc., 1995

Visual Processing and Cartoons and Photographs

Each form of the GED 2001 Social Studies Test will include at least one political cartoon and photograph as source materials. Similar to these visuals, advertisements and posters may also be used as source material on the test. Examinees should gain experience reading political cartoons such as those found in the editorial sections of newspapers. They must understand that the cartoons use pictures, symbols, labels, caricatures, and captions to express a point of view (not necessarily a fact). Examinees must also understand that political cartoons are often humorous (depending on your point of view!) but also have an underlying message. Test-takers must be able to identify symbols—Uncle Sam, the Maple Leaf, the Hawk and Dove, for example—and understand how caricatures that distort and exaggerate can be favorable or unfavorable portrayals of a person or idea.

Examinees will need to practice getting more information from photographs. Not only should they learn to determine the theme by reading captions and titles—they should dig deeper, examining details, key subjects, and background features to understand the photograph's content, importance, and relevance. Examinees should be aware that every photo expresses a photographer's point of view about the subject by emphasizing details, using different angles, and juxtaposing subject matter within the photograph.

Evaluating Graphics and Visuals

Today's high school graduates must be able to understand the relationship of data in a graphic or visual to data in prose sources. Likewise, GED examinees must simultaneously use information from a variety of sources—graphic and prose—to reach conclusions, make comparisons, and predict outcomes about public policy issues, historical developments, and economic trends. For example, an examinee must be able to use information from a regional resource and topographical map and description of the economic activities of the region's population to answer questions about land use and environmental changes.

Examinees must also be able to detect inaccuracies, distortion, and bias in graphics or visuals.[2] They must be able to work with the knowledge that some visual systems such as billboards, newspaper articles, television reports, films, and computer software may inadvertently do the following:

- Portray map projections that exaggerate features of the globe
- Provide illustrations in a chart that obscure the meaning of the data
- Vary scale and proportion in graphs that illustrate two sets of statistics being compared
- Portray opinion and belief as fact

The Visual Media

Finally, examinees must be able to appreciate, analyze, and evaluate media industries that primarily rely on visual stimuli (e.g., commercial advertising, newspapers, political propaganda, and film). High school-level social studies teachers expect graduates to be aware of the influence these industries have in all aspects of our lives. In social studies especially, examinees must be able to distinguish between visuals that are designed to persuade with facts and visuals that persuade by distorting facts. Examinees should be able to distinguish among hard news, features, and commentary in newspapers and TV news. They should understand political persuasion techniques such as the "bandwagon approach" and "glittering generalities," as well as how similar formulae are used in advertising. For example, the adult high school graduate should know how to distinguish between the "packaging" of a product in an advertisement and its actual ingredients and effectiveness.

Visual Learning as a Modality for Lifelong Success

Educational psychologists remind us that we all learn in a variety of ways—from printed and spoken word, from body movement and performance, from visual stimuli such as pictures, graphs, and diagrams, and others.[3] They tell us that the more of these ways to learn that we develop, the better

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Eleven States Fund Family Literacy

The National Center for Family Literacy reports that family literacy programs are continuing to spread. Seven states have enacted, or are attempting to enact, legislation: Kentucky, Washington, Hawaii, Louisiana, South Carolina, Colorado, and Arizona. Four states—Nevada, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts—are supporting family literacy using means such as new budget line items and governors' discretionary funds under Welfare to Work. For more information, go to www.famlit.org.

Free GED Testing Marks Big Event

In March, LaSalle University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, offered a day of free GED testing to the first 40 registrants to mark the anniversary of the college's charter. The offer was limited to candidates living within specific zip codes to ensure that the service benefited the local community. For more information, contact Alternate Chief Exa niner June Robinson at (215) 951-1189.

Hispanics Lead Adult Ed Enrollments

It may not be surprising to know that Spanish is the language most often spoken at home by ESL participants, but did you know that Hispanic adults comprise almost half (40 percent) of all adult education enrollments in the United States? According to the U.S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education, data from 1997 also show that 31 percent of adult education participants are white and that 16 percent are African-American.

"Skills Gap" in New Workers Rises

An American Management Association (AMA) survey finds that more than 33 percent of job seekers lack the basic literacy skills required by the jobs for which they are applying. This figure is up from 19 percent in 1996. The AMA says that the jump is a result of employers needing to fill technology-rich jobs that demand stronger reading and math skills. Faced with an expanding economy in which skilled workers are scarce, companies tell AMA that they are increasingly willing to hire people whose skills need upgrading and then provide the needed training. More than half of those seeking jobs in the wholesale and retail sectors did not have the necessary basic skills, while only 23 percent of those applying for jobs in the financial services industry lacked good enough skills. For more information, contact Eric Greenberg at egreenberg@amanet.org.

Technology Ideas to Borrow

North Carolina has a resource guide for adult educators who want to update their services but who may be dazed by new technology. *Uses of Computer Technology in Adult Basic Skills/Literacy Programs: North Carolina Practice and Ideas from Other States* provides guidance in evaluating

continued on page 12

From basic reading through GED preparation, KET videos help adult students prepare for the future.

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"When assessing the state of the art of adult literacy instruction, all the roads lead to KET."
from TELEVISION AND ADULT LITERACY, a Ford Foundation report

Teaching Tips, from page 10

equipped we are for a lifetime of learning. In the GED 2001 Social Studies Test, examinees will have more opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency by using their visual processing skills to demonstrate their knowledge of history, geography, civics and government, and economics. ▲

1. Schneider, Donald, et al. *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.* Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, 1994.
2. Wainer, Howard. "How to Display Data Badly." *The American Statistician* 38:2 (May 1984): 148–49.
3. Gardner, Howard. *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice.* New York: Basic Books, 1993.

Joyce Hoover is the social studies test specialist for the GED Testing Service.

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software, creative ideas for using PCs, and technical assistance sources. To get one free reproducible copy, contact Nancy Massey at (919) 733-7501, extension 501, or masseyn@ncccs.cc.nc.us.

Training Specialist Wanted

The National Center for Family Literacy, a private nonprofit organization located in Louisville, Kentucky, is seeking a creative, dynamic family literacy training specialist. The person will design and deliver family literacy training, staff development, and technical assistance across the United States. The incumbent must be willing to relocate to Louisville and to travel extensively. Send resume and letter of application to: Office Manager, National Center for Family Literacy, 325 West Main Street, Suite 200, Louisville, Kentucky 40202-4251.

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New Orleans Fire Chief Honored at GEDTS 1999 Summer Conference

The GED Testing Service recognized New Orleans Fire Department Chief Warren E. McDaniels with the Cornelius P. Turner Award during the annual GED Conference, which was held in San Diego July 13–17.

The award, named for the founder of the GED testing program, is given annually to a GED graduate who has made outstanding contributions to society in educational, public, or social service. McDaniels was presented with the Turner Award for his lifetime achievements in the field of public safety, as well as his dedication and leadership in education initiatives and his patronage to cultural and social service organizations.

During his career, McDaniels has taken a leadership role in national fire safety organizations and has helped the New Orleans Public Schools provide GED testing for aspiring firefighters. McDaniels also coordinated and developed an educational fire safety program for children called "Learn Not to Burn" that has contributed to an 18 percent reduction in fire-related deaths throughout New Orleans since his appointment in 1993. Under his leadership, the city has improved its fire insurance rating, resulting in significantly lower insurance premiums for citizens.

A New Orleans native and lifelong resident, McDaniels earned his GED diploma in 1968 and joined the fire department in 1969.

"Earning my GED was like walking through a gate. I felt an awakening leading me to wonder what I could achieve," McDaniels says. Within one month of testing, he took two employment exams and was offered two jobs as a result, one of which was with the fire department. McDaniels is the first fire chief to have risen through the ranks to head the department, and he is the first African American commander of the New Orleans Fire Department.

Widely recognized in his field, McDaniels vice-chairs the Metropolitan Chiefs Division of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and will assume the chair in 2000. In addition, the

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Pictured from left to right: Fred Edwards, Director, Partner Outreach, GED Testing Service; Betty McDaniels; Warren E. McDaniels, New Orleans Fire Department Chief; and Joan C. Auchter, Executive Director, GED Testing Service

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At-Work GED Training Empowers Employees

by Kathleen Kelly Halverson

On the night of April 13, 1999, training staff at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas prepared for the kickoff of a new GED training program. They set out fifty chairs, in hopes that some of the hotel's 1,000-plus employees without high school diplomas would be interested in learning more about earning a high school equivalency diploma. The overwhelmingly positive response they received was even better than they had predicted—more than three times the expected number of employees showed up.

By the time the evening began, 165 people crowded the room. Some were interested in learning more about what's involved in taking the GED Tests. Some were there to support their friends and colleagues. Still others signed up on the spot. The training program went into full swing a week later.

More than 100 employees now attend John Davis's weekly GED instructional classes that will eventually take them to test day—and to a future of better career opportunities, increased earning potential, higher self-esteem, and continued education and growth.

"The thing that struck me was that most of these people who came were not embarrassed. They didn't let pride get in the way of their getting more education," says Becky Perich, former General Training Coordinator for the Bellagio Hotel. "One of the guest room attendants—who has a very demanding job where a lot is expected of her—told me at the kickoff, 'I'm not going to be a maid for my whole life. I need to get an education.' We're really excited. . . with employees coming forward, we can actually do this GED training program. It's something we're anxious to begin."

"Most of those who graduate stay on, and a lot of our employees who have earned the GED through us have gone on to supervisory positions."

The Bellagio employs 9,500 people and is just one of the luxury hotels under the umbrella of Mirage Resorts, Inc. Owners Steve and Elaine Wynn are longtime advocates of employee training and continuing education. "They feel that education is important. This training program is a benefit they wanted to provide to their employees," says Perich. And five years ago, the first GED training program came to the Mirage, one of the many Mirage Resorts hotels.

The exciting stories of program graduates show how this investment benefits both the employees and the organization. "The employees can move forward in their education and careers, and the Bellagio retains high-quality, skilled employees," says Marty Windham, Bellagio's General Training Coordinator. By committing to the program's long-term success, Mirage and Bellagio managers are also securing employee loyalty.

"Most of those who graduate stay on, and a lot of our employees who have earned the GED through us have gone on to supervisory positions," says Perich. One example is Dario Lopez, originally from Mexico, who started in the Steward Department in 1995 and was promoted to Assistant Executive Steward after earning his GED diploma through Bellagio. Another example is Carlene Beam, who received her GED diploma through the Mirage and is now the Supervisor of the Uniform Room. She oversees the provision of uniforms for more than 5,000 people.

"The goal of the GED training program is to keep everyone at the same pace so that they can take the GED Tests together," says Windham. To achieve this goal, GED instructor John Davis teaches four classes per week—two on Tuesday and two on Thursday. These multiple sessions, all of which cover the same material, are designed for the employees' convenience and accessibility as well as to keep everyone moving at a similar pace.

GED *Items* (ISSN 0896-0518) is published bimonthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE). GED *Items* is not copyrighted. Readers are invited to copy any articles not previously copyrighted. Credit should be given in accordance with accepted publishing standards.

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Enrollment is consistent, according to Windham and Davis. Approximately 100 people regularly attend class every week. The GED attendance policy is that you go to class once a week. "One person today asked me if they could attend more than one class—absolutely," says Windham. "If they attended class on Tuesday but, after studying, felt that they still missed something or couldn't quite understand a concept, they can come to another class that week, ask more questions, and receive supplemental instruction."

Typically, says Instructor John Davis, it takes approximately four to six months for the class to be ready for the tests.

In addition to GED instruction, Windham hopes to bring GED testing on site, as needed. "If there's a large number of employees who are ready to take the tests at the same time, then we're hoping to get the local GED Examiner to come to the Bellagio," says Windham. (In the past, students have gone to the nearest Official GED Testing Center.).

That feeling of familiarity, the comfort of place, would be a definite advantage for the test-takers. "If we have as many as thirty students willing to take the GED Tests, we can do it in-house, which would make it comfortable for them," says Davis. Such a large number of examinees would require the local GED Examiner to bring along an Alternate Examiner or proctor to assist. The final arrangements depend on how many students stick with the training and how the program goes over the next few months. Typically, says Davis, it takes

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***Fire Chief**, from page 1*

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has appointed McDaniels to the Board of Visitors of the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Besides his work as a public servant, Chief McDaniels also chairs the Board of Directors of Volunteers of America of New Orleans, which administers elderly and community living arrangements, halfway houses, maternity and adoption services, and thrift stores. He is vice-chair of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, which stages the annual Jazzfest and other events. Evidence of his commitment to public service is clear in Chief McDaniels' response to the news that he had been selected as this year's Turner Award winner: "How will my winning this award help others?" he asked.

During the July 16 awards ceremony, McDaniels introduced a surprise guest, baseball legend Don Newcombe, who addressed conference participants about accomplishing the impossible. Newcombe related his personal experiences of breaking baseball's color barrier, linking his own experience with that of GED graduates who have overcome the barrier of not having a high school diploma.

Wally Amos, who as "Famous Amos" founded the gourmet chocolate chip cookie industry, gave the keynote address at the awards dinner. Other speakers included two GED graduates who are now successful leaders in the adult education community, Molly Robertson of Indiana and Althea O'Haver of Arkansas. During the awards ceremony, scholarships were also presented to six outstanding California GED graduates. Their stories are featured on page 7. ▲

Wally Amos Delivers Keynote at Honors Dinner

Former cookie entrepreneur Wally Amos served as the keynote speaker at an awards banquet during the 1999 GED Administrators' Conference in San Diego, California.

A GED graduate, Amos is widely known for the cookies he began selling in the 1970s. He has since founded the Uncle Wally's Muffin Company. Adult learners and educators may also be familiar with Amos' genial, relaxed style through his appearances as host of the KET series, "Another Page." Today, he is a popular motivational speaker and has authored several books on coping with setbacks and developing a lifestyle that is consistent with one's interests and values.

Amos told the audience, "When people tell you that something can't be done, they're really talking about themselves. They don't think *they* can do it. It's not about how easy or hard it is, because everything is possible. The impossible just takes a little longer."

Wally Amos, pictured here with Molly Robertson, Director of Indiana Learn At Home, offered lessons about life after the GED diploma to awards banquet guests.

1998 Figures Show GED Tests Passing Rate on the Rise Since 1997 Minimum Score Change

The number of adults earning a General Educational Development (GED) high school equivalency diploma increased by 5 percent during the 1998 calendar year, according to GED's 1998 Annual Statistical Report (ASR), *Who Took the GED?*, which was released to the public on August 6. More than 506,000 people earned a GED credential in 1998, bringing to nearly 14 million the estimated number of adults who have received GED diplomas since 1949.

Who Took the GED? documents the general make-up and performance of GED test-takers in North America and internationally. In 1997, the GED Testing Service raised the minimum passing standard to reflect changes in secondary school educational requirements, and, as expected, pass rates for the GED dipped in 1997. In 1998, however, figures show a 2.5 percent recovery in the number of adults meeting the raised standards.

In fact, sixteen of the thirty-six jurisdictions exceeded the passing rates they posted in 1996, when less stringent score requirements were still in place. "In 1997, we estimated that the higher passing score requirement might encourage examinees to study longer and further develop their skills before taking the GED Tests, and the evidence suggests that this has in fact happened," said GED Testing Service Executive Director Joan Auchter.

Those states with increased passing rates were Arizona (10.2 percent), Puerto Rico (8.9 percent), Connecticut (6.6 percent), Alabama (5.0 percent), Wyoming (4.9 percent), Iowa (3.9 percent), Hawaii (2.1 percent), Minnesota (3.2 percent), Georgia (3.0 percent), Maine (2.9 percent), Nevada (2.1 percent), Kansas (2.2 percent), New Hampshire (2.0 percent), South Carolina (1.3 percent), Pennsylvania (.9 percent), and North Carolina (.4 percent).

For the remaining thirty-three jurisdictions where the standard was not raised in 1997, the overall 1998 passing rate was the same as the overal passing rate recorded for 1996 (71.2 percent).

The number of adults taking the GED Tests in the United States has increased 17.8 percent during the past decade, while participation in Canada has declined 29.1 percent. In 1998, more than 718,000 adults worldwide completed the GED battery of tests—about the same number as in 1995 (723,899) and 1997 (722,461).

Sixteen of the thirty-six jurisdictions [which raised passing scores in 1997] exceeded the passing rates they posted in 1996, when less stringent score requirements were in place.

Highlights

Milestones

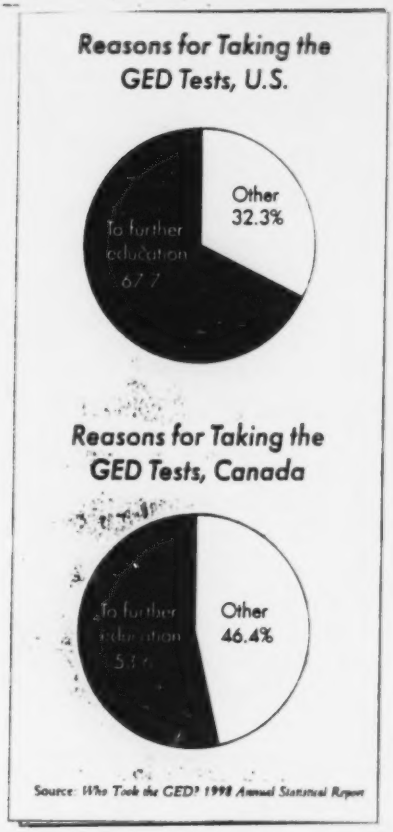
- New York, the first state to administer the GED Tests to civilians, became the second jurisdiction to issue its millionth GED diploma. Texas surpassed the one million mark in 1996.

Jurisdictions Showing Increased Testing Volume of at Least 10 Percent

Jurisdictions	%
New Mexico	17.3
Northwest Territories	23.7
Texas	13.2
Prince Edward Island	20.1
Wisconsin	12.9
Ontario	19.8
Wyoming	13.1
Saskatchewan	14.6
Minnesota	11.3

Age, Formal Schooling, and Academic Goals

- The average age of adults taking the GED Tests in 1998 was 24.4 in the U.S. and 30.7 in Canada.
- Most U.S. adults earning GED high school credentials were between ages 18 and 24 (54.4 percent). Most Canadian GED graduates earned their credentials between ages 20 and 34 (57.4 percent).
- As in previous years, two in three adults (67.1 percent) reported completing grade ten or higher before leaving traditional schooling. More than one in three (37.4 percent) reported completing grade eleven or higher.
- Two of every three U.S. adults (67.7 percent) and more than one of every two Canadian adults (53.6 percent) reported that they took the GED Tests for reasons related to further education (e.g., college or trade school).


Reasons for Taking the GED Tests, U.S.
Other 32.3%
To further education 67.7
Reasons for Taking the GED Tests, Canada
Other 46.4%
To further education 53.6
Source: Who Took the GED? 1998 Annual Statistical Report

Special Editions and Special Testing Accommodations

- During the past decade, the number of adults taking special editions of the GED Tests has more than doubled (1,169 in 1989 to 2,503 in 1998).
- In 1998, the number of adults taking special editions of the GED Tests increased by 9 percent over 1997.
- A total of 3,482 adults requested and received additional time to complete the GED Tests because of documented disabilities—a 7 percent increase over 1997.

Who Took the GED? GED 1998 Annual Statistical Report is available for $20 plus $5 for shipping and handling from the GED Fulfillment Service, P.O. Box 261, Annapolis Junction, MD 20171; (301) 604-9073 (phone) or (301) 604-0158 (fax). ▲

Conference Features GED 2002 Strategic Plan, Tuition Awards

More than 200 GED Administrators and adult education policymakers convened in San Diego July 13–17 to review the program's fifty-six-year history and plan the future of the GED testing program. The attendees talked about program features, state directives in learning disabilities, and special editions testing and participated in ongoing project planning for the new series of GED Tests.

A special pre-conference session offered orientation and policy information for new GED Administrators and provided a separate meeting for Canadian program leadership. On the first full day of the conference, GED Administrators met in a joint session with the State Directors of Adult Education, so that the instructional and testing program leaders could address common issues such as state-level initiatives to support adults with learning disabilities and plans for the new series of GED Tests.

New Test Release Date Set for GED Tests

GED Administrators worked on specific plans for introducing the new series of GED Tests, making recommendations for the timing of public information campaigns and other activities. They unanimously supported moving the introduction of the tests from September 2001 to January 2002, and the GED Testing Service will implement this recommendation. Among the reasons the GED Administrators cited for moving introduction of the new tests to January 2002 are:

- Many programs are closed during the summer months, making the delivery of new tests in time for a September 1, 2001, start-up date prone to difficulties.
- The "down time" offered by the holiday season offers an excellent opportunity for transition from the 1988 series to the 2001-series tests.
- A January start date will offer programs a better ability to track the number of individual testing opportunities within a contract year.
- Annual Statistical Report data for 2001 would otherwise require "mixed" reporting of testing data from the 1988-series tests and 2001-series tests.

STARS Introduced

The meeting also offered GED Administrators an opportunity to meet the eleven Strategic Training and Resource Specialists, or STARS, who will provide technical assistance and training resources to GED Administrators and Examiners throughout the United States and Canada. (For more information on the STARS, see page 10.)

Distinguished Service Award

Elvin Long, GED Administrator and State Director of Adult Education for the State of Missouri, was presented with the Distinguished Service Award. This award is given each year to a GED Administrator who has demonstrated consistent long-term service to the GED program above and beyond his or her normal responsibilities. A former

continued on page 7

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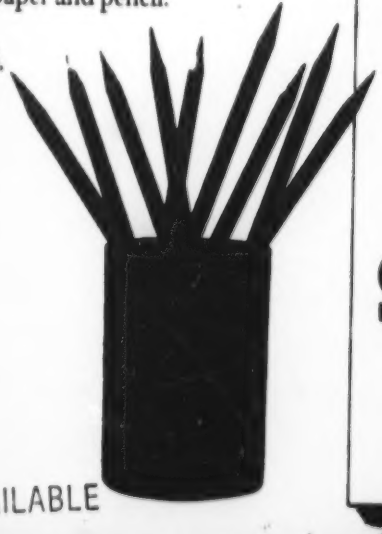

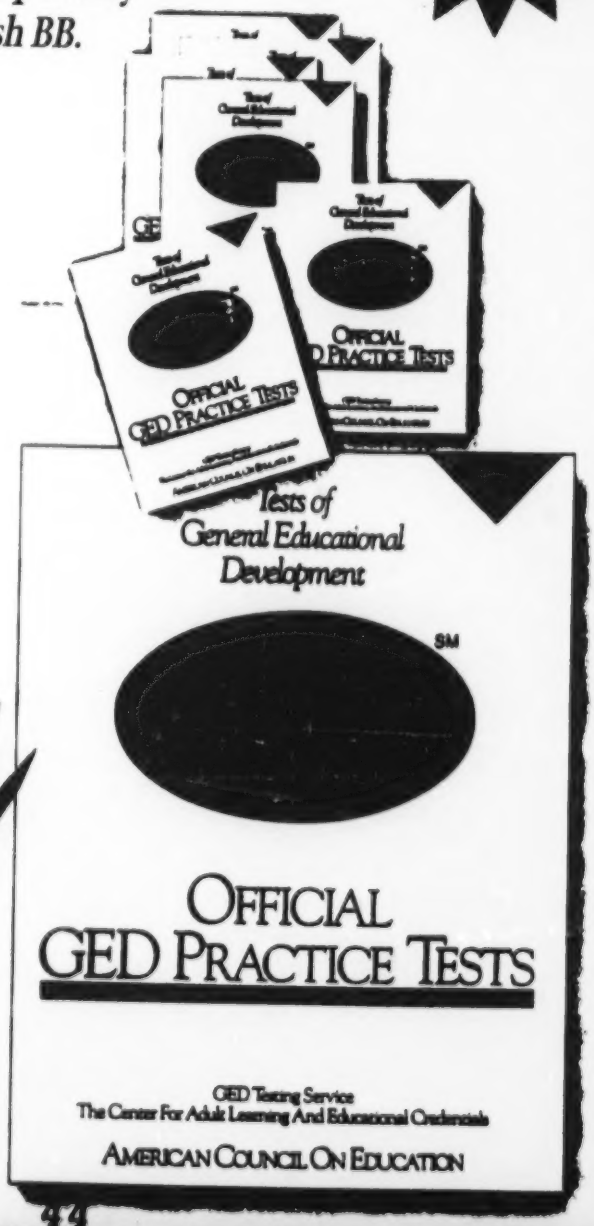
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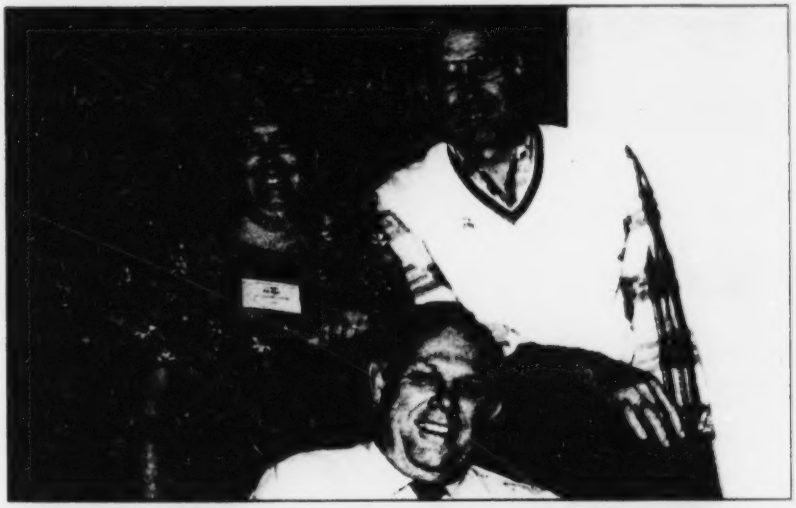
GED Conference, from page 5

physicist and high school science teacher, Long has worked with the GED program for twenty-five years. Also honored for his twenty-five years of service to the GED program was Roz Petrilli, GED Administrator for the state of Illinois. Kati Niemi, Customer Service Manager for the GED Testing Service, was recognized for her twenty years of service to the program.

GED Tuition Scholarship Program

Each year, in partnership with the GED Administrator hosting the annual conference, the GED Testing Service selects GED graduates to honor in the tuition scholarship program. Through this program, founded in 1997, selected GED graduates receive a one-time $500 tuition grant.

Winners are selected to provide broad representation of age, gender, and race/ethnic background as well as reasons for taking the tests—whether to gain access to further educational or employment opportunities, to serve as a role model for younger family members, or to improve self-esteem. The GED Testing Service also evaluates the candidate's plans for the future, leadership potential, and community involvement. "Going to the Awards Dinner was one of the most memorable times of my life," scholarship winner Esmeralda Reyes later wrote to the GED Testing Service. "I went there scared and feeling like I wouldn't belong with everyone else, and I came away with a warm feeling in my heart for all who helped put this dinner on and for those of you who made me feel like I could be anything I want to be." Six Californians were selected for the 1999 award:



Elvin Long, GED Administrator for Missouri (seated) received the 1999 GED Distinguished Service Award during the GED Administrators' Conference in San Diego. Long has served the GED program for 25 years and will retire to join STARS. Also honored for 25 years of service was Roz Petrilli, GED Administrator for Illinois (standing, right). Kati Niemi, GEDTS Customer Service Manager (standing, left), received recognition for her 20 years of service with the GEDTS program.

Wesley Farris, San Bernardino. Several years after leaving high school, Wes became a quadriplegic as a result of a car accident in 1981. He was featured in the *San Bernardino Sun* after successfully completing the GED Tests with accommodations for his disability. Now, having completed his A.A. in Psychology in June with a 3.2 GPA, he is enrolled at California State University San Bernardino with plans to become a child psychologist.

Lucia Veronica Hendriks, Costa Mesa. Married with two daughters, Lucia left school at sixteen and soon after became a full-time mother. As her daughters grew older, she "saw the opportunity to serve as a good role model and create a brighter future for her family" by taking GED classes. Currently attending Orange Coast Community College, Lucia plans to finish her B.A. at the University of California at Irvine and become a lawyer and university instructor.

Christopher North, Escondido. A single parent, Christopher left a series of low-wage jobs and put himself and his daughter on public assistance so that he could return to school. A high school football player until his junior year, he is now a teacher's aide working with disabled teenagers and planning a career as a teacher. Christopher attends Palomar College and volunteers in his daughter's PTA. He was recently featured in the *San Diego Union-Tribune.*

Esmeralda Reyes, La Puente. A single parent with a nine-year-old daughter, Esmeralda was a medical office assistant-turned-home health care worker. When she became disabled by back pain, her

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Calculator Part of New 2002 Math Test Series

by Kenneth Pendleton

In one of his best-known songs, Bob Dylan proclaimed "the times, they are a' changin." The upcoming Series 2002 Mathematics Test clearly echoes those words.

Two significant changes are planned for the new series: the use of a calculator for half of the test and the inclusion of alternate format items.

At the 1997 meeting, the Mathematics Test Specifications Committee recommended the use of a calculator on the new series of GED Tests. They suggested a solar-powered, scientific model that follows algebraic logic and can compute square roots. At the committee's final meeting in January 1999, the committee placed the price ceiling for the calculator at $5.00. Most believed it would be impossible to find a scientific calculator at that price. However, they thought it a simple task to find a low-priced calculator that met the other specifications. What fools these mortals be!

An exhaustive five-month search ensued that included phone calls to major producers, searches of catalogues, stores, and the Internet, and personal contact with manufacturers' representatives. The choices were narrowed to two. The finalists were the only basic calculator discovered that followed algebraic logic and the ideal envisioned at the specifications committee's first meeting: the Casio fx-260 Solar model. The main argument against the scientific calculator was that examinees might find it intimidating. What proved to turn the tide was the GED Testing Service's own promise that the GED Tests should measure "the major and lasting outcomes of a four-year high school course of study." Anyone who saw the calculators would know that, of the two, only the Casio is likely to be found in today's high school mathematics classrooms.

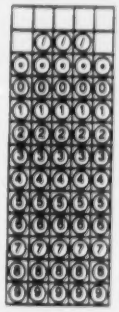
While the acquisition of the calculator proved to be a monumental task in terms of time and energy, the inclusion of the calculator may be the less dramatic change on the new series. Familiarity with the workings of and comfort in using a calculator is increasingly common—and will become more so. However, the alternate format items are situations likely to be new to examinees and thus of more concern to them.

Unlike the familiar multiple-choice format, alternate format items do not present the examinee with responses from which they must choose the one that is correct. Sometimes more than one correct answer for an item may exist, and strategies to narrow choices are less likely to be successful. Three means of evaluating answers through an alternative format are being tested: a grid for entering a single number, a grid for entering an ordered pair, and a section of the number line on which a dot will be placed. (*Note:* These illustrations appear in the recently completed *Item Writers' Manual for Mathematics*, available from the GED Testing Service.)

Standard Grid

The most common type of alternate format question on the new series will involve the standard grid on which a student can enter a single numerical answer (see Figure 1). It also serves as a guide for completing the grid. While the top row need not be completed, the bubbles must be filled in to indicate the desired answer (see Figure 2). To complete such an item correctly, the examinee needs to know that:

Figure 1
Standard Grid

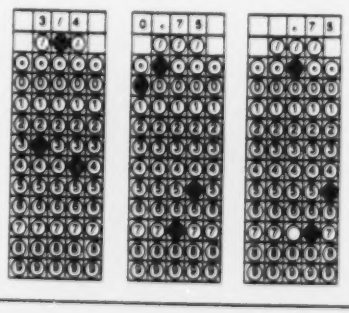


- Answers can be entered from left to right, right to left, or centered.
- For an answer other than a whole number, either a fraction or a decimal can be entered.
- Mixed numbers (for example, 1 3/4) cannot be entered.
- Unused columns should be left blank.

Figure 2
Standard Grid Example

Question: The scale on a map indicates that ⅛ inch represents an actual distance of 120 miles. In inches, how far apart on the map would two towns be if the actual distance between them is 180 miles?

Answer: The correct answer is 3/4, or 0.75, inches. The answer could be gridded using any of the methods below.

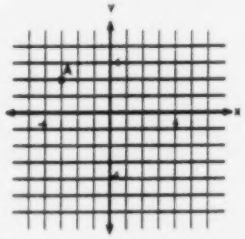


Ordered Pair Grid

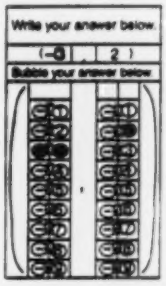
The ordered pair grid will, as far as we know, be unique to the GED Mathematics Test. Using this alternate format, the examinee can enter the coordinates of a point on the coordinate plane (see Figure 3). Unlike the standard grid, this format allows negative values to be entered. Each coordinate must be an integer from −9 to 9.

Figure 3
Ordered Pair Grid Example

Question: Name the coordinates of point A on the graph below.



Answer: The coordinates of point A are (-3, 2). This answer should be filled in as shown.

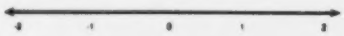


Number Line

The number line alternate format consists of a section of the number line on which the examinee places a dot to represent the approximate location of a point meeting specified conditions (see Figure 4). Generally, there will be no exact location for the point. A range of values will be established within the secure computerized scoring program, and any response falling within that range will be scored as correct. In this scenario, clearly there is not only one correct answer. However, items that have more than one correct response also have been created for the other two types of alternate formats.

Figure 4
Number Line Example

Question: Place a dot on the section of the number line to show the location of a number that, when squared, is less than the number itself.



Answer: There is no specific answer to this question. Any mark placed between zero and one, such as those indicated in the diagrams below, would be correct.

In addition to those alternate formats already being field tested, others are being considered. A grid for entering the slope of a line, such as a linear function, has also been created, and the most far-reaching concept allows the examinee to sketch a line of best fit for data that is generally linear in nature. This last prospect opens the door to many truly real-life applications—which is, of course, the goal of the GED Tests.

These two innovations—the use of a calculator and the alternate format items—will present the examinee with more real-life situations than were possible before. The GED Mathematics Test will more closely mirror the standards as proposed by NCTM and detailed in GEDTS's recently published *Alignment of National and State Standards*. With a flourish, the GED Mathematics Test will be ushered into the next century. It is an exciting time for mathematics at GEDTS. ▲

Kenn Pendleton is the Mathematics Test Specialist at the GED Testing Service.

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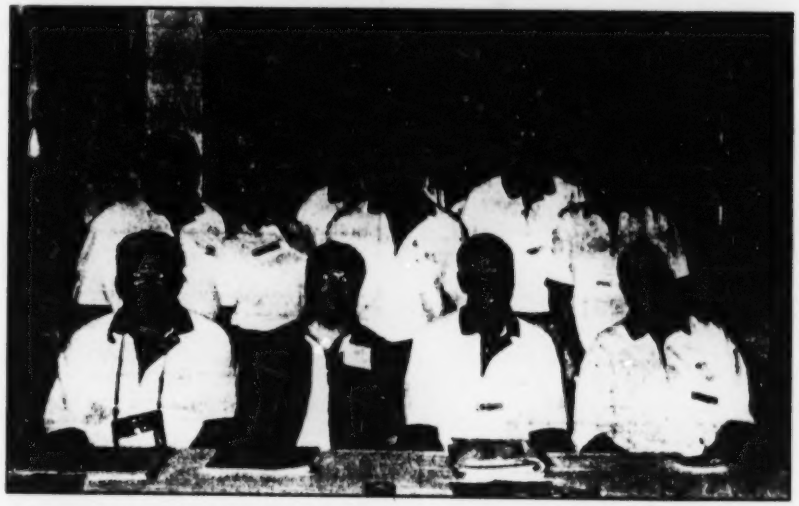
GED STARS to Provide Training and Assistance

by Kyle S. Malone

The theme for the 1999 GED Administrators' Conference in San Diego was "Mission Possible." One area that embodies this philosophy is the new GED Testing Service initiative: the Strategic Training and Resource Specialists (STARS).

The STARS initiative brings together eleven seasoned GED and adult education professionals who will serve as consultants to the GED Testing Service. Through this initiative, the STARS professionals will provide technical assistance and training resources to GED Administrators and Examiners in the United States and Canada. These professionals will provide training in the areas of test security, development of model testing centers, and training for GED Administrators and GED Chief and Alternate Chief Examiners.

The key to the strength of STARS is the experience and knowledge that each consultant brings to the position. More importantly, these individuals are widely respected in the area of GED and adult education. Each of the STARS is a former GED Administrator or key GED testing program official: Richard Armanini and Pat Taylor, Arizona; Patricia Blair, Virginia; Cathy Erwin, Texas; Alex Hyman, Maryland; David Fischer, Florida; Harlan Stubbs, Kentucky; Peter Kilburn, New Brunswick, Canada; Colleen Venters, Oklahoma; and Gene Dickson, South Dakota; and Elvin Long, Missouri. Together, they represent more than 300 years of experience in GED program operations.



Front row, left to right: Richard Armanini, Patricia Blair, David Fischer, Alex Hyman. Second row: Elvin Long, Cathy Erwin, Gene Dickson, Kyle Malone, Colleen Venters, Harlan Stubbs, and Pat Taylor (not pictured: Peter Kilburn)

The strength of STARS is the experience that each consultant brings to the position.

Former Arizona GED Administrator Pat Taylor sees the STARS initiative as a mentoring partnership with states and provinces. "I'm excited about the opportunity to assist in promoting and preserving GED processes and procedures."

In their previous roles, both Peter Kilburn and Alex Hyman have chaired the GED Advisory Committee, while Cathy Erwin and Harlan Stubbs have served as at-large members. David Fischer succeeded Richard Armanini as GED Administrator for Ohio, and Alex Hyman operated the District of Columbia's GED testing program. Colleen Venters directed GED testing for the state of Oklahoma's correctional system. During her career, Patricia Blair has been GED Administrator for both South Carolina and Virginia. In addition, Hyman, Kilburn, Erwin, Blair, and Long are all past recipients of the GED Distinguished Service Award.

The STARS training calendars are beginning to fill up. Each jurisdiction has a number of resource days based on their program's testing volume. The GED Administrator for each state, province, or territory is responsible for submitting a request for training at least five weeks prior to the training date. GED Chief Examiners who are interested in using the STARS should call their GED Administrator. ▲

Kyle S. Malone is the Field Service Manager for the GED Testing Service. For more information, please contact Kyle at (202) 939-9478.

Young GED Graduate Defies Fear of Failure

by Janai C. Belcher

I was looking out the window in September 1995 when I saw my mother pull up in the driveway, with my two little brothers in the backseat of our old, beat-up Buick. Our situation was severe: We had been living in a women's shelter for two weeks, with no money, no food (of our own), and certainly no place to live that didn't include my family sharing one room. My mom had separated from my stepfather. She didn't speak of the reasons, but I saw the abuse and I knew why we had to leave.

Desperate to do something for my family, I begged her to let me drop out of my junior year of high school. Up to that point, my mother had strongly opposed the idea, understanding the hardships I would face without a high school diploma. I was only sixteen, but I felt that I needed to work to help us get back on our own. This goal seemed unreachable. Mom reluctantly agreed, but I promised to earn my high school equivalency diploma when we moved into our own place. What I couldn't foresee was how hard it would be to get my GED—and the internal struggles I would face with myself along the way.

I rejoined the ABE/GED program twice, quitting both times. I would throw myself into studying but was terrified to actually take "the exam."

I began waitressing and my mother found a job as a cook, allowing her and my brothers to move to a small place of their own. I moved in with a friend, continued to support myself as a waitress, and signed up for Adult Basic Education (ABE)/General Educational Development (GED) classes. My long waitressing hours and intense nights of studying made it tough for me to realize the long-term advantages. I saw no benefits—only the bags under my eyes and precious few hours of sleep. When I set my mind on something, I either throw myself into it or give up; this time I gave up.

I was only sixteen years old—to the average person just a child, but to the enormous world I lived in, a child beyond her years. I met my husband-to-be, Steven, at the small restaurant where I worked, and we got married six months later, in April 1996. Steven was in the Army, working in demolitions, and I got a job delivering pizza. I rejoined the ABE/GED program twice, quitting both times. I would throw myself into studying but was terrified to

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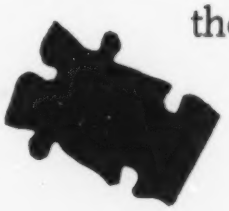

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***Young GED Grad,** from page 11*

actually take "the exam." I was scared to disappoint my husband and my mother—two people who had encouraged me to do something about my dreams. After the third time of quitting the GED classes, I realized that I needed some sort of motivation.

I got that motivation in the summer of 1996, when I found out I was pregnant. My biggest concern now was our baby's future. How could I look at my child and tell him that he could be anything he wanted to be—and be successful at it? Although my mother had told me the same thing, I learned the hard way that success requires a lot of work. I set another goal—to have my diploma in hand before my baby was born.

Again, I threw myself into studying—not because I enjoyed it, but because I was afraid of failure. Knowing that my results rested in my own hands, I tried my best. One day, after my teacher could not answer a complicated algebra question that I asked, she told me that I was more than ready for the GED Tests and she would kick me out of her class if I didn't take them (half joking, half seriously). I was ecstatic—the day had finally come.

It took my husband an hour to get me out the door that morning—none of my excuses worked. When I got to the testing site, I could feel my confidence rise when I realized that I was not alone: Others knew how much they needed a GED diploma. One of my fondest memories occurred before the tests, when we were giving each other words of encouragement. The elderly woman sitting next to me told me that earning our GED diplomas could only make us stronger and wiser. She said that even though we know how smart we are, we had to also prove it to the world and to our family and friends.

Many of my own friends and family members frowned upon the GED program. But it was great to share with them the facts that were given to me:

- Only one-third of high school graduates would be able to pass the GED Tests.
- If I had stayed in high school, based on my performance on the GED Tests, I would've passed in the top 10 percent of my class.

The last fact really blew the "nonbelievers" away, and they eventually saw how much the program benefited me.

I could feel my confidence rise when I realized that I was not alone: Others knew how much they needed a GED diploma.

During the torturous two weeks following the exam, I would walk to the mailbox every day, returning with only bills. On the day I received my GED diploma and congratulatory letter from the Department of Education, I was so excited, I ran to show my husband and call my mother. We shared a few memories from the year before and recalled the journey I had taken. After talking with my teacher, Mrs. Miller, I discovered that my score was 311. A passing score was 225. And that was only the beginning.

The following summer, a graduation ceremony would be held for any willing participants who had earned their GED diplomas the previous year. I was happy to participate and even happier when the director asked me to give a speech at the graduation—a little insight into what I had endured to reach this point. She had not seen many students who had attained a score above 300—and I was honored to talk to others about my experiences.

In my speech, I emphasized the challenges that we had all endured before we reached our final goal of earning the GED. Each of us had earned the right to walk across the stage. I had since enrolled in classes at Central Texas College (CTC), and I vowed that one day I would be walking across a different stage, accepting a college degree. I thanked my mother and my husband, two people who were my inspirations, my "shoulder," and in part, my teachers.

I am currently attending college. I'm keeping up my 4.0 GPA and soon, I'll have an associate's degree in Computer Science, Networking. I plan to use my degree to become as successful as I've always dreamed. And if I do get the chance to speak again on a different stage, I will thank the same people, along with many more who have helped me since then. Without my GED diploma, I never would have been the success that I dream of and plan to become.

Janai has been balancing her classes at CTC with her full-time position in the audit department of a hotel. She and her family recently moved to Austin, where her husband has accepted a position with a communications company. Janai plans to enroll in more classes this January. After she earns her associate's degree, she plans to find work in her field (computers) and pursue a bachelor's degree part time. We learned about Janai when she e-mailed ged@ace.nche.edu seeking information on financial aid. ▲

Canada's GED Pioneer Dies at Age 69

Turney C. Manzer, the former GED Administrator for Nova Scotia, died June 2 in Halifax as a result of injuries sustained in a fall last year. He was 69.

Turney Manzer introduced the GED program to Canada in 1969. He had a deep interest in those adults who had not completed their secondary education and were seeking another opportunity to demonstrate their academic proficiencies. Upon returning from Korea a decorated veteran, Manzer served the Canadian Army in the Personnel Selection Corps, retiring with the rank of Major, before joining the provincial department of education. "Turney first became aware of the GED program during his eighteen years of service with the Royal Canadian Regiment, and as an officer, he confronted educational issues in his work," recalls Gary Eyre, Arizona's former director of adult education.

As the American Council on Education prepared to re-norm the GED Tests in 1967, Manzer explored with Neil Turner, then-director of the GED Testing Service and the program's founder, the feasibility of providing the GED Tests in Nova Scotia. Two years later, Nova Scotia became the first Canadian province to operate a GED program.

Manzer became the province's GED Administrator and directed the program until he retired in January 1995. During those twenty-five years, Manzer was instrumental in getting other Canadian provinces and territories to join the GED program. Today, all provinces and territories except Quebec offer the GED. "The GED is in Canada because of one person—Turney Manzer. He will be missed," said Allan Quigley, author of *The Canadianization of the GED* and chair of the adult education department at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Manzer served two terms on the GED Advisory Committee, including a term as chairman. He also led the caucus of Canadian GED Administrators. Widely consulted for his expertise and recognized for his leadership and vision, he became the first recipient of the GED Distinguished Service Award in 1993.

In honor of Manzer's contributions, a new award has been established. The Turney C. Manzer Award will be presented annually to a GED staff person in Canada who best exemplifies Manzer's contributions to the GED program—a passion for serving adult learners, expanding testing services, meeting special needs, attention to test security, and continuous efforts to promote the credibility and acceptance of the GED diploma.

The award, sponsored by Contemporary Publishing, will enable the recipient to attend the Annual GED Administrators' Conference, a professional development experience that Turney Manzer valued and enjoyed. ▲

Special thanks to Peter Kilburn and Gary Eyre, who provided information for this article.

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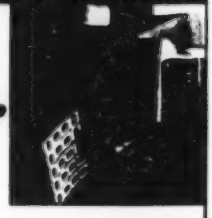

"Students routinely increase their test scores by two to four years in nine months time. There also have been many instances where students have shown increase of six to seven years in the same amount of time"
Sandra Linn, Associate Professor,
San Diego Community College.

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GEDTS Website Selected as "Top Site"

The GED Testing Service (GEDTS) website (www.gedtest.org) was recently selected as a "Top Site" by Educating.net, a leading online education resource. Educating.net offers opportunities for various types of training, specifically information on GED/high school diplomas, distance learning college degrees, professional retraining, and continuing education for health care and other professionals. Educating.net provides answers for people looking for an MBA program at a prestigious university, a law degree that will allow them to practice in their state, or information on the $55 billion offered annually in college scholarships. The site also offers sections on career counseling and employment opportunities. To view the GED listing or to use Educating.net's services, visit the website at www.educating.net.

Teachers of Adults May Need Updated Methods

Preliminary results from a study by Hal Beder at Rutgers for the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy find that adult education classes most often use strategies that focus on teacher-to-multiple learners interactions. The most common of these strategies was an assigned exercise followed by a teacher-led question-and-answer session. In the programs studied, the interaction seldom is between learners. The new Workforce Investment Act funding criteria favor programs that teach in context, promote learner-to-learner interaction and other effective practices, and use technology in the classroom. Beder's full results are expected in November.

Grandparents Play Role in Home Learning Environment

When Grandma says she's earning her GED to set a good example, she's not kidding! A report released July 1 by the U.S. Census Bureau reports that in three-quarters of families that include at least one grandparent and young children, a grandparent—usually the grandmother—maintains the household. In addition, the bureau reports that about two-thirds of children in households led by grandmothers alone live in poverty. For more information, go to www.census.gov.

Sunshine Improves Learning Outcomes

One of the largest and most rigorous studies ever performed on lighting in schools indicates that students in classrooms that have more daylight learn faster and perform better on standardized tests. According to *Sacramento Bee* reporter Carrie Peyton, statisticians analyzed the test performance of more than 21,000 elementary school students in California, Washington state, and Colorado. Researchers report that that learning rates were 26 percent higher in reading and 20 percent higher in math in classrooms with the most natural light.

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The research also examined the sun's effect on retail sales and found that stores with skylights saw up to 40 percent higher sales income when compared with identical stores in the same retail chain that didn't have skylights.

Steve Selkowitz, who heads the building technologies department at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, says the research is "one of the better recent studies that indicates there are effects here worth looking at." Heschong-Mahone Group, a Sacramento-based energy consulting firm, conducted the research for the California Board for Energy Efficiency and Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

SLD Advisory Panel Formed

GEDTS will host the first Specific Learning Disabilities Advisory Committee meeting on October 21–22. The committee will provide a review and consulting mechanism for GEDTS policy on adults with learning disabilities. Members of the committee are: James Koller, Ph.D, State of Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant in SLD and ADHD to the University of Missouri; Steve Wooderson, Coordinator, Program Services, Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Patricia Latham, J.D., an attorney specializing in disability law; Dan Fey, Learning Disability Projects and Education Services Coordinator, Seattle-King Co. Private Industry Council; Mardis D. Dunham, Ph.D., Director of School Psychology, Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling, Murray State University; Carlita CMJ Perkins, Director, Professional Development, Adult Education Division, Maryland Department of Education; Carl Paternostro, GED Administrator, Bureau of Career and Adult Education, Connecticut Department of Education.

Workplace Education Means Real Gains, Study Shows

A recent study of workplace education reveals that a male employee with high literacy skills has lifetime earnings totaling $1.36 million more than a male with low literacy skills. Instead of lifetime earnings of $806,000, he can be expected to earn $2.16 million—a 267 percent difference. For female employees, the return is higher—a 362 percent increase in lifetime earnings. The findings reveal that employees participating in the programs studied gained eleven essential basic skills that helped them raise their performance level in the workplace. The study was funded by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education in partnership with the Conference Board. For a free copy of the report, contact rickie_gallmon@ed.gov.

Education Pays Dividends

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that education continues to make a difference in a person's paycheck. Its 1999 report shows that full-time workers 25 and older with less than a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of $342, compared with $481 for high school graduates (no college) and $842 for college graduates. The estimates were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted each month in all fifty U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

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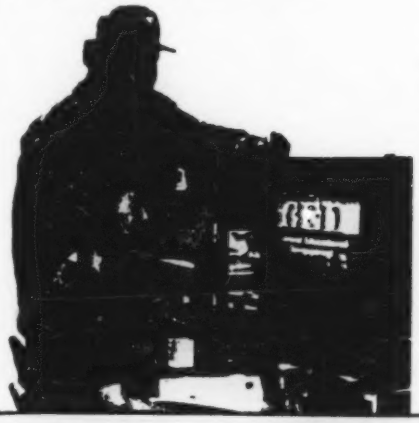

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"When assessing the state of the art of adult literacy instruction, all the roads lead to KET."

from TELEVISION AND ADULT LITERACY, a Ford Foundation report

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GED Prep Classes, from page 3

approximately four to six months from the time they signed up for the class to be ready for the tests. But it all depends on that particular group of students and the pace at which they move.

Now that the word's out, Windham says, there's tremendous hope for the program's continued success. "People are continually coming up to me and asking me about the GED training program. Some don't have the time right now but have every intention of taking advantage of this opportunity later down the road. And that's promising for the future of this program." ▲

Kathleen Kelly Halverson is the managing editor of GED Items *and coordinator of writing and editorial services for the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials.*

Scholarship Recipients, from page 7

patients encouraged her to earn her GED and get training for a new career. Esmeralda has been accepted to Concorde College, but is still looking at other programs that offer licensed vocational nurse (LVN) training. Her daughter plans to become a doctor.

Lori Sanchez, San Jose. A single parent, Lori left high school and got married, only to find herself "trapped for years" in an abusive relationship. After several months in a women's shelter, she found a place of her own and a position as a receptionist and data entry clerk for the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose earlier this year. Lori writes poetry and attends college part time, where her interests are astronomy, mathematics, and computers.

Robert Steele, Ventura. (not pictured) Married with two children, Bob left school at age sixteen. After years of working in manufacturing jobs, he found that he needed more education to pursue the civil service job he wanted. "Being back inside a classroom was very strange but, as I sat there, I saw things differently than I had as a sixteen-year-old kid...I found that I could not wait to get to class and get to work on my next assignment." An avid surfer and mountain cyclist, he is now enrolled at Ventura Community College and is a member of the Ventura County Sheriff's Deputy Academy Class of 2003.

The 2000 GED Tuition Scholarships will be awarded to GED graduates in South Carolina. Applications will be available in November 1999. For more information, contact Lisa Richards Hone at (202) 939-9493. ▲

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2002-series GED Tests: What's New?

During the summer of 1997 at the annual GED Administrators' Conference in San Antonio, Texas, the state, provincial, and territorial GED Administrators requested simple charts, by content area, that compare the 1988-series GED Tests with the 2002-series GED Tests. Basically, they asked, "What remains the same?" and "What is different?" The GED test specialists have developed a set of answers to these questions for each of the five tests in the GED battery.

The GED Testing Service is now researching and validating specifications recommendations for the new 2002-series GED Tests. The tests will feature some major changes from the previous series and will reflect the impact of welfare-to-work legislation and the increased emphasis on academic standards in the K–12 community. The 2002-series GED Tests will continue to follow their original purpose of providing a basis for conferring a high school equivalency diploma on adults who have not graduated from traditional high school.

The 2002-series GED Tests reflect the most up-to-date, widely used secondary school curriculum standards and standardized assessment practices available. As with all previous GED test series, graduating high school seniors will serve as the norm group through which passing scores are set. The GED Test Development Unit is presently developing and field-testing "try-out" items with representative samples of high school seniors. Data gathered this fall and spring from the try-out sessions will provide the basis for further development of the 2002-series tests.

The 2002-series GED Tests reflect the most up-to-date, widely used secondary school curriculum standards available.

Some changes do not directly impact what GED candidates will need to know and demonstrate. For example, the names of Test 1: Writing Skills and Test 4: Interpreting Literature and the Arts will change to reflect their kinship in the content area of Language Arts. Beginning in January 2002, they will be called Test 1, Language Arts: Writing and Test 4, Language Arts: Reading. And in Test 4, while the classifications from which selections are chosen will be rearranged, test-takers will continue to read and interpret fiction and nonfiction, prose, poetry, and drama, from a variety of cultures and time periods.

Other changes will have more of an impact on the adult learner. A significant example of such a change is the introduction of the calculator (see teaching tips on page 10). As a result, the GED Mathematics Test will be presented in two booklets: Part I permits the use of a calculator, Part II does not. As with the Writing Skills Test, an examinee will have to complete both parts of the test to earn a score. If an examinee doesn't successfully complete both parts, he or she will have to take both parts again. In addition, candidates will encounter business-related and adult-context information texts across all five tests. On Test 2, Social Studies, U.S. examinees can count on seeing at least one excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence*, the *U.S. Constitution*, the *Federalist Papers*, or a key Supreme Court decision.

The chart on page 3 offers more details about the changes that the GED community can expect with the new series of tests. Additional information can be found on the GED website at www.gedtest.org. ▲

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ACE/GED Testing Service Signs on to Skills Plan

by Joan Auchter

This past summer, at our annual GED Administrators' Conference in San Diego, the GED Testing Service announced a plan to increase to 1,000,000 the number of GED test-takers in 2002. This initiative is only part of a national blueprint for preparing a skilled American workforce needed for the global economy of the next century. The American Council on Education (ACE) and the GED Testing Service have joined other leading education, business, labor, and government organizations in presenting Vice President Al Gore with *Skills for a New Century: A Blueprint for Lifelong Learning*. The report is the work of the 21st Century Skills Leadership Group, convened by Gore earlier this year to evaluate current workforce learning practices and develop concrete steps to help the U.S. meet its future needs. The report contains a series of commitments by education, business, labor, and government to improve educational opportunities for adult learners.

The report proposes the following four key workforce learning goals:

- Deliver education, training, and learning that are tied to high standards, lead to useful credentials, and meet labor market needs.
- Improve access to financial resources for lifetime learning for all Americans, including those in low-wage jobs.
- Promote learning at a time and place and in a manner that meets workers' needs and interests.
- Increase awareness and motivation to participate in education, training, and learning.

In support of these goals, ACE has pledged to:

- Produce a new generation of GED Tests that reflect the major and lasting academic outcomes of a high school education, with an increased emphasis on the demands of the workplace and higher education.
- Collaborate with the AFL-CIO and the National Association of Manufacturers to expand the "College is Possible" campaign to include information for working adults on how to access workplace-based tuition and scholarships. The AFL-CIO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Institute for Literacy will develop hyperlinks to the "College is Possible" campaign website that will direct businesses and others to important lifetime learning resources for workforce preparation.
- Provide America's Learning Exchange (ALX) with information on all 3,200 GED testing sites and publish information on accessing postsecondary education and training in its newsletters, which reach more than 50,000 educators.
- Strengthen its civilian and military registries to provide lifelong learning transcripts for qualified Americans.
- Work with the American Association of Community Colleges and the National Association of Manufacturers to urge policymakers to permanently extend Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Partner with the University of Wisconsin and the U.S. Department of Education to put the External Diploma Program on the Internet. The External Diploma Program is a performance-based high school credentialing program.

Tony Sarmiento, who has chaired the GED Advisory Committee and is also assistant director of education for the AFL-CIO, is working with us to build a workplace strategy to encourage employers to offer the GED Tests. I know many of you have successful programs in place, and I look forward to featuring them in upcoming issues of *GED Items* and at our July 2000 conference in South Carolina.

continued on page 4

GED *Items* (ISSN 0896-0518) is published bimonthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education (ACE). GED *Items* is not copyrighted. Readers are invited to copy any articles not previously copyrighted. Credit should be given in accordance with accepted publishing standards.
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Charting the Course to 2002: a Summary of Changes

TEST	What's the Same	What's Eliminated	What's Included for 2002
Test 1: Writing Skills (renamed Language Arts: Writing)	45-minute essay; 3 item types (correction, revision, and construction shift); Sentence structure, usage, and mechanics; Information documents ("passages"); Part I, multiple-choice, and Part II, essay; Examinee must complete both parts.	Spelling—except for homonyms, possessives, and contractions. Commas—only tested when they are used to eliminate confusion.	Business Communications (letters, memos, e-mail, reports, applications, etc.); "How to" texts (e.g., dressing for success, leasing a car, planning a trip); both 200–300 words, 12–18 sentences. Organization—transitions, text divisions, topic sentences, and unity/coherence. Length may expand to 250 words.
Test 2: Social Studies	Multiple-choice in sets and single items; Measures comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation; Covers history, geography, civics, government, and economics; National, global, and adult contexts; Text and visual sources.	Behavioral science—psychology, sociology, anthropology—not tested as separate content area; some concepts tested within context of other areas.	More history, civics, and government; More graphics, photographs; More clearly defined content in U.S. and world history; More analysis; Different content areas tested within same item set; More single-item questions; At least one "practical" document (voters' guide, tax form, etc.); At least one excerpt from *U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Federalist Papers*, or landmark Supreme Court cases.
Test 3: Science	Multiple-choice in sets and single items; Text and visual sources.	More single items, fewer item sets.	Integrated with National Science Education Content Standards; Earth science includes space science; Physical science includes physics and chemistry; Increased focus on environmental and health topics (recycling, heredity, disease prevention, pollution, climate) and on science's relevance to everyday life; 50% conceptual understanding; 50% problem-solving.
Test 4: Interpreting Literature and the Arts (renamed Language Arts: Reading)	Reflect diversity—gender, ethnicity, age, region; Passages range from 300–400 words; One poem (8–25 lines) and one piece of drama represented; No graphics, viewing addressed in textual manner.	Definitions: Popular Text and Classical Literature redefined as time periods; "Literal comprehension" now "comprehension"; "Inferential comprehension" now "synthesis."	Content areas defined by type of text: Literary (75%) and Nonfiction (25%); At least one comparison/contrast question, Nonfiction will include one business document and one selection about visual representation; 20% comprehension, 15% application, 30–35% analysis, 30–35% synthesis.
Test 5: Mathematics	Measures algebra, geometry, number relations, and data analysis. 25% set-up questions—examinee must identify correct way to solve problem.	"Not sufficient information" questions decreased from 12% to 4%.	More emphasis on data analysis and statistics; Two parts: Part I permits calculator, Part II does not; Candidate will have practice time with calculator prior to test; Alternate Format items approximately 20%; Item sets in which candidate must access multiple pieces of information—pie charts, bar graphs, tables.

1998 GED Graduates Honored for High Scores

Each year, the GED Testing Service supports states, provinces, and territories that recognize the GED graduate(s) who have achieved the highest score on the GED Tests within their respective jurisdiction. Each "high scorer" is presented with a plaque honoring his or her achievement.

Standard scores on the GED Tests range from 20 to 80 on each of the five tests in the battery. Thus, the highest total score that one can earn is 400 total standard score points. The highest score earned overall in 1998 was 397. The average overall score among GED Outstanding Achievement award winners on the U.S. English-language tests was 372; those testing on the Canadian English-language version averaged 366. Hubert Landry of Bertrand, New Brunswick, scored 360 on the French-language version. U.S. award winners averaged age 26, while Canadian award winners averaged just under age 35.

To be eligible for the Outstanding Achievement Award, the GED graduate must obtain a minimum total score of 300 or higher on the GED Tests and meet other eligibility criteria. If you would like more information on the selection process for high scorers in your state, province, or territory, contact your GED Administrator or Cassandra Alston, Special Projects Coordinator at the GED Testing Service, at (202) 939-9490.

United States

Alaska: Nathan Edward Brown, Palmer. *Arkansas*: Nickey Duane Seeman, Wrightsville. *California*: Joshua David Johnson, Encinitas. *Florida*: Vivian J. Shuemake, Tallahassee. *Hawaii*: Karyn M. Illingworth, Aiea. *Idaho*: Lessa North, Pocatello. *Iowa*: Brian R. Livengood, Modale. *Kansas*: Elkin W. Osorio, Wichita. *Kentucky*: Jesse C. Saxon, Lexington. Leonard R. Pearson, Beattyville. *Maryland*: Joan C. Dameron, Bowie. *Michigan*: Jonathan L. Short, Fenton. *Minnesota*: Rhonda L. Nichols, Prior Lake. *Nebraska*: Kevin Dwayne Nelms, Lincoln. *New Hampshire*: Nicole Angela Penfield, Exeter. *New Mexico*: Susan Adele Evans, Portales. *North Dakota*: Heidi Michelle Karges, Omaha. *Rhode Island*: Jacob J. Amato, North Smithfield. *South Carolina*: Jennifer Gayle Bateman, Charleston. *Utah*: Steve Downard, Logan. *Virginia*: Mary Alice Tasillo, Bridgewater. *Washington*: Orion A. Bawdon, Bellingham. *West Virginia*: Timothy Chandler, Statts Mills. *Wisconsin*: Elizabeth A. Walz, River Falls.

United States Territory

Guam: Blossom Q. Camacho, Agana.

Canada

Alberta: Jason Brett St. Martin, Fort McMurray. *British Columbia*: Harvey D. Moxness, Quesnel. *New Brunswick (English-language)*: Randy Arthur Corey, Fredericton. *New Brunswick (French-language)*: Hubert Landry, Bertrand. *Northwest Territories*: Cameron York, Yellowknife. *Nova Scotia*: Jeannie Frances Eisnor, New Germany. *Ontario*: Heather Brigitte Jordan, Barrie. *Saskatchewan*: Joanne Betty Donison, Regina. *Yukon*: Tracey J. Powell, Watson Lake.

The following jurisdictions have not reported high scorer data for 1998: *Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Wyoming, American Samoa, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, DANTES, Federal Prisons, Michigan Prisons, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island.* ▲

***Skills Plan**, continued from page 2*

In addition to these commitments, ACE—along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, National League of Cities, and the U.S. Department of Labor—will help promote a national literacy summit in February 2000. The summit will bring together a broad group of stakeholders to create an action plan that will address how to close the skills gap. Hosting this summit will be the Lila-Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, Harvard University's National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Institute for Literacy, the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, and the National Coalition for Literacy.

This is truly an exhilarating time to be involved with adult education and the GED program. Please contact us with news about workplace education ventures in your area. I look forward to sharing more news about this initiative in the months ahead. ▲

Canadian GED Testing Program Marks 30 Years

The cool, crisp air of Canada's Maritime provinces offered the setting for the Canadian GED program to mark its 30th anniversary. Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, hosted representatives of the GED and adult education community, Canadian corporate scholarship sponsors, and honored guests.

A highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of the Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd. GED Scholarship by the company's coordinator of Educational Programs for the Atlantic Region, Clair Ripley. The award's purpose is to encourage and assist GED recipients in Canada's Atlantic Region in pursuing a postsecondary education in science, mathematics, or engineering. This year's scholarship, which carries a value of $1,000 (C), went to Alex Pudsey. Also honored at the event was Jeannie Eisnor, the province's Outstanding Achievement Award winner for 1998 (for more information on this annual award, see page 4).

Laurie Edwards and Fred Edwards, Director, Partner Outreach, GEDTS, present the 1998 Outstanding Achievement Award to Jeannie Eisnor (for more information on this annual award, see page 4).

In addition to a new tuition award established this year by Gage Publishing (see related story on page 9), Contemporary Publishing has established a recognition program for Canadian GED staff members. Named for the founder of the GED program in Canada, the Turney C. Manzer Award will be presented annually to a GED staff person in Canada who best exemplifies Manzer's contributions to the GED program—a passion for serving adult learners, expanding testing services, meeting special needs, attention to test security, and continuous efforts to promote the credibility and acceptance of the GED diploma. ▲

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New GED Administrators

The GED Testing Service welcomes the following state and provincial GED Administrators to the program. These are the officers to contact if you have questions about jurisdictional policies, transfer/verification of scores; issuance of diplomas, eligibility requirements, and other test operations questions. Richard Diaz, *California* (800) 331-6316; Joe Birmingham, *Kansas* (785) 296-2210; Lisa F. Schwendau, *Kentucky* (502) 564-5117; William King, *Michigan* (517) 373-1692; Bill Poteet, *Missouri* (573) 751-3504; Mary Katherine Moen, *Nevada* (775) 687-9167 or 9104; Thomas Henry, *New Jersey* (609) 633-9715; Jim Shindledecker, *Pennsylvania* (717) 783-6871; Mike Anderson, *South Dakota* (605) 773-4463; Phyllis Pardue, *Tennessee* (615) 741-7054; Walter H. Tillman, *Texas* (512) 463-5491; Jo Anne Hug, *Alberta* (780) 427-0010; Mark Gavard, *Manitoba* (204) 325-1711; Annette Albert, *New Brunswick* (French) (506) 453-8237; Loretta Molyneaux (acting), *Prince Edward Island* (902) 368-4690.

Showtime GED Movie Inspires

In a Class of His Own, a true story of how a school janitor earns his GED diploma, made its debut on the Showtime cable channel. Lou Diamond Phillips portrays Callahan High School janitor Rich Donato, who learns that his job is in jeopardy because he does not have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Popular with the students as a sort of ad-hoc counselor, Rich must confront his learning disability and ask for help in preparing for the tests so that he can continue to provide for his young family.

The producers took some dramatic liberties with the way the tests are administered that should get the attention of any conscientious Examiner. When the producers contacted the GED Testing Service for information during the pre-production phase of the filmmaking process, GEDTS asked to review the script for accuracy. While many script corrections were made, the producer informed GEDTS that to keep the drama moving, they would take poetic license and may not be entirely faithful to the GED process. Several errors made it to production:

- The GED Tests were described as a "five-hour" exam.
- A passing score of "81" was emphasized repeatedly.
- Examiners scored tests in the presence of examinees.
- There was not enough time to send essays away for scoring.
- Rich takes the tests four times within a few weeks; another young man reports taking the tests "ten times" in a similarly short time.

One Chief Examiner remarked after viewing the film, "It really is an inspiring piece. . .it celebrates the GED Tests as a way to open doors. With an opportunity to correct the misinformation, I would be comfortable using this film as a motivational piece."

For more information, visit Showtime's website at www.sho.com.

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Training in Alaska: STARS Shine in the North

by Kyle S. Malone

The Strategic Training and Resource Specialists, or STARS as the GED Testing Service (GEDTS) likes to call them, are part of a new initiative in which GEDTS is bringing together eleven seasoned GED and adult education professionals who will serve as consultants to GEDTS. The STARS will provide technical assistance and training resources to GED Administrators and Examiners in the United States and Canada. These professionals will provide training in the areas of test security, development of model testing centers, and training for GED Administrators and GED Chief and Alternate Chief Examiners. The project is being led by Kyle Malone, Field Service Manager for the GEDTS.

The state of Alaska is famous for many wonderful treasures, from Alaskan salmon to the majestic peaks of Mt. McKinley. On October 11, 12, and 13, GED Examiners and Adult Basic Education Directors from across the state participated in workshops and training during their annual statewide conference. I joined GED Strategic Training and Resource Specialists (STARS) Pat Taylor and Patricia Blair and watched them deliver their workshop and training magic to our colleagues of the tundra.

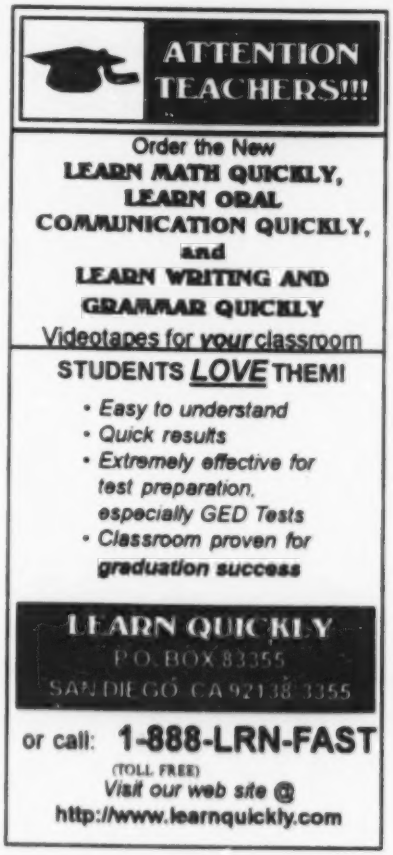
The STARS had the unique opportunity to train and work with Joyce Middleton, Carol Northamer, and Tommye Byington of Nine Star Enterprises, formerly an Official GEDTS Essay Scoring Site and now a newly established GED Testing Center. Historically, Nine Star has provided Adult Basic Education services and activities in the areas of correctional education and staff development. The training at Nine Star covered GED history and proper test administration practices, as well as processes for ongoing examiner training and addendum site evaluation.

The following day, our GEDTS STARS Taylor and Blair presented a day-long GED Chief Examiner training program. The training sessions' interactive learning included model test center development, test security, the 2002-series GED Tests, and providing accommodations for specific learning disabilities. The state's GED Administrator, Marsha Partlow, stated upfront that their goal is "to provide cutting-edge information on GED policy." In addition, she asked the STARS to share the international perspective on GED issues with local personnel. On the final day, Taylor and Blair provided some updated information on the 2002-series GED Tests (see cover story). This updated information is also available on the GED website by following the links for teachers and examiners at www.gedtest.org.

Marsha Partlow and I ended our journey with a site visit to the Alaska Military Youth Academy, where we were hosted by staff members Timothy Jones and Jon Johnson. This year, the academy began its first year of the Challenge Program, an Army Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) that combines GED preparation and testing with a disciplined military program. Many U.S. states have Challenge Programs in operation; between 85 and 92 percent of Alaska's Challenge Program participants are either employed or are enrolled in academic or vocational training twelve months after their GED graduation.

Throughout our trip to Alaska, we discovered many things of which the state can be proud, not the least of which is the way Alaska's GED program is administered. ▲

For more information about STARS, contact your state, provincial, or territorial GED Administrator, or call Kyle Malone at (202) 939-9478. For more information about the Challenge Program, call (907) 384-6015.



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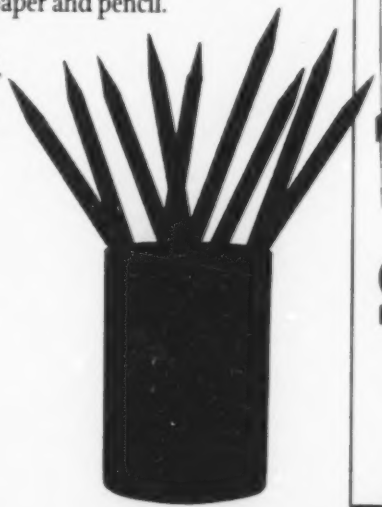

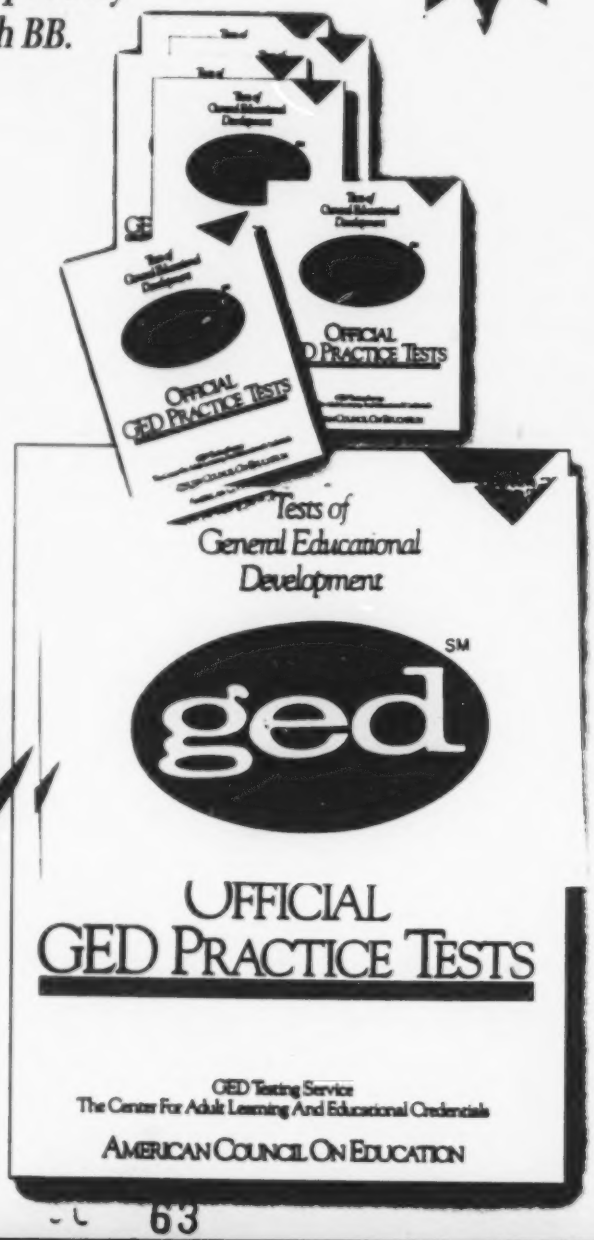

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Gage Educational Publishing Establishes National Scholarship for Canadian GED Graduates

by Jim Barlow

Gage Educational Publishing and Canada Publishing Corporation marked the International Literacy Day celebrations in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, with the announcement of the Gage GED Graduate Scholarship. This annual scholarship of $1,000 (C) will be awarded to assist a Canadian GED graduate in pursuing a postsecondary education in a Canadian university/college or an apprenticeship training program.

At the September 7 event, Ronald D. Besse, the corporation's chairman and chief executive officer, told the audience that it was appropriate to announce the new scholarship in Nova Scotia and in September because the first GED testing session was held in Canada, and the first Canadian GED certificates—four of them—were awarded in Nova Scotia exactly thirty years ago. Since 1969, more than 305,000 Canadians have earned GED credentials. GED testing is now available in every Canadian province and territory except Quebec. Gage Educational Publishing recognizes the dedication and diligence of adults who return to full-time studies and the financial challenges they encounter. The average GED graduate in Canada is over 30 years old and often has family obligations. Returning to school for them represents a considerable financial sacrifice that can affect their family's lifestyle. The staff at Gage hope that this scholarship will assist GED graduates in bridging the financial barriers that otherwise could prevent them from achieving their postsecondary goals.

The annual GAGE GED Graduate Scholarship of $1,000 (C) will be awarded to assist a Canadian GED graduate in pursuing a postsecondary education in a Canadian university/college or an apprenticeship training program.

Ronald D. Besse, Canada Publishing Corporation Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

The first application deadline for the Gage Educational Graduate Tuition Scholarship will be June 1, 2000, and every June 1 each year thereafter for programs that begin the following September.

Established in 1844, Gage Educational Publishing, a division of Canada Publishing Corporation, is the largest publisher and distributor of GED preparation materials of print and software in Canada. Gage publishes Canada's most popular GED preparation book, *Passing the GED*, with more than 150,000 copies sold to date. ▲

Jim Barlow is the product manager of Gage Educational Publishing's Adult Education Division. To obtain applications and conditions of eligibility, contact Jim in care of Gage at 164 Commander Boulevard, Scarborough, Ontario M1S 3C7. You can also send him an e-mail at jbarlow@gagelearning.com, or call (800) 667-1115, ext. 245.

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CenterPoint
The Adult Education E-Source

Calculator Instruction Offers Active Learning Experience, High School-Level Training

by Kenneth Pendleton

In the last issue of *GED Items*, we described the GED Testing Service's search for an appropriate calculator that GED test-takers could use in the new 2002-series tests. We selected the Casio *fx-260 SOLAR* model (see figure 1) as the one calculator that: a) meets the test specifications committee's requirements, and b) is likely to be found in a traditional high school setting. Beginning in January 2002, Examiners will issue the *fx-260* to candidates during Part I of the Mathematics Test.

To aid instructors in teaching calculator skills, Casio manufactures an overhead calculator nearly identical to the *fx-260* (see Figure 2). Both models are available at reduced prices through the GED fulfillment service and the *fx-260* is widely available in stores. This article will describe the minor difference between the two models and provide guidance for making the overhead calculator a valuable and powerful instructional tool.

The transparent Casio *oh-280* overhead calculator is about three times the size of the student model and sits directly on the overhead projector. Instructors can demonstrate the process of using the calculator, and students can see and follow the process keystroke-by-keystroke.

Overhead and Under Hand

On the *fx-260* model, the square root key is fourth from the right on the top row. On the *oh-280*, it is third from the right on the top row. There's a point to be made for this sole, slight difference: The purpose for teaching adults to use the calculator is not to enable them to use one particular calculator but to enable them to use any calculator. With instruction, students gain the skills not only to compute a square root, for example, but to perform *any* function indicated by the orange lettering above the keys. Further, the process is the same regardless of what calculator they might encounter in the workplace, trade school, or college.

Knowing what calculator will be provided for use on the GED Mathematics Test and becoming familiar with its operation beforehand will help remove anxiety and ensure examinees' success.

Shift Key and Square Root

Let's consider how to use the calculator to find a number's square root. Suppose you wanted the calculator to compute the square root of 9:

First, enter the number whose square root you wish to know (9). Then locate the square root symbol, above the key marked "x^2." These "second functions" are accessed easily in a way similar to the "shift" key on a computer or typewriter keyboard. First, press and release the "shift" key (located at the top left), then press the "x^2" key to access its second function—square root.

Figure 1
Casio *fx-260 SOLAR*

Demonstrating this process using the overhead calculator will show students what to expect on their own calculator. The word "shift" appears in the upper left-hand corner of the screen, but the number does not change. When the square root function is accessed, the word "shift" disappears, and the answer appears on the screen. When selecting the Casio, GEDTS analyzed the amount of time required to find the square root. One participant in the study tried to press "shift" and "x^2" simultaneously. Students need to know that good

Figure 2
Casio oh-280

manners work with calculators, too: "No pushing, no shoving; press one key at a time, please."

Order of Operations

When searching for the right calculator for the 2002-series tests, the one capability that excluded almost every low-priced model was whether it followed "order of operations." The calculator needed to multiply or divide before it added or subtracted (assuming no parentheses). When working with representatives of various companies, I asked them to compute "two plus three times five" and tell me the result. The correct answer is 17; however, most basic calculators compute 25. These basic calculators produced the correct answer if the problem was entered as "three times five plus two."

Students can follow this process by viewing what happens on the overhead calculator. When "2 + 3" is entered, the screen remains blank because the calculator does not know whether to complete the operation or wait for a higher order operation. The "equals" (=) sign tells the calculator that you've reached the end of the problem. When "3 x 5" is entered followed by the "plus" (+) sign, the calculator does the multiplication and awaits the number to be added, because multiplication takes precedence over addition. To complete the problem, the "=" sign is pressed at the end.

Parentheses and the Missing "x"

The Casio calculators can also evaluate expressions involving parentheses, including nested parentheses (parentheses within parentheses). An activity involving a parenthetical expression offers the instructor an opportunity to reassure students that they are still smarter than a calculator is! Students know that "2(3 + 5)" means that the quantity within the parentheses is to be multiplied by two, but they must "translate" the expression for the calculator by inserting a "times" (x) symbol. To evaluate the expression with the calculator, follow these keystrokes: 2, x, left parenthesis, 3, +, 5, right parenthesis, =.

Negatives and Positives

The calculator can do arithmetic with positive and/or negative numbers in any expression involving real numbers. In this way, the instructor can help students discover arithmetic rules with positive and negative numbers. To enter a number such as negative eight (-8), first enter the number ("8"). Next, press the "change sign" key, located

continued on page 12

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Calculator, continued from page 11

directly above the "7" key. The display now shows the negative number (-8). By producing varied examples (and counterexamples), students can explore all possible combinations for any arithmetic operation, thus actively learning the rules for themselves. This method of teaching also will increase the examinee's comfort in using the calculator.

The points covered in this article will be incorporated into the directions for calculator use that will be included with the 2002-series Mathematics Test. Candidates who become familiar with the Casio *fx-260* beforehand will find these directions a handy refresher during the testing session.

Knowing what calculator will be provided for use on the Mathematics Test and becoming familiar with its operation beforehand will help remove anxiety and ensure examinees' success. But more importantly, the examinee will demonstrate his or her ability to manipulate a widely used tool. Employers expect high school graduates to be familiar with a calculator, and beginning in January 2002, GED graduates can demonstrate that they, too, have experience in this key area. ▲

The purpose for teaching adults to use the calculator is not to enable them to use one particular calculator but to enable them to use any calculator.

Kenn Pendleton is the Mathematics Test Specialist at the GED Testing Service.

GED Calculators Now Available!

Casio *fx-260* Solar, $7
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